



ANGLIAN WATER INDEPENDENT CHALLENGE GROUP

MINUTES

Date: 15 September 2025

Time: 9:30-12:00

Location: Virtual

Present: **ICG members**

- Craig Bennett – Chair (M)
- Rick Butler – Environment Agency (M)
- Joanne Lancaster – Independent (M)
- Nathan Richardson – Waterwise/Blueprint for Water (M)
- John Vinson – CCW (M)

AW colleagues

- Lisa Bush – Head of Pollution Strategy
- Geoff Darch – Water Resources Strategy Manager
- Brian Ebdon – Director of Strategic Planning and Performance
- Don Maher – Customer and Operational Services Director
- Angela McCabe – Head of Stakeholder & Community Engagement
- Alice Piure – Long Term Delivery Strategy Technical Lead
- Darren Rice – Regulation Director
- Claire Russell – Legal Director
- Emily Timmins – Director of Water Recycling
- Lottie Williams – PR24 Customer Insight Lead
- Laura Wing – Corporate Communications

- Vicky Anning – Secretariat (O)

Apologies:

- Mark Thurston – Chief Executive Officer

Summary of actions

Actions	Status
NEW	
1. Lottie to share feedback from CB members from their May site visit.	Open
2. Lottie to share information on incident responses (as shared with CB).	Open
3. AW to share updates on CMA determination with ICG as soon as available.	Pending
4. Behaviour change and local comms to be added to future ICG agenda.	Open
5. Brian to share: updated performance slide, detailed breakdown of ODI metrics and asset management maturity framework.	Open
6. Lottie to share information about tariff trials.	Open
7. Angela McCabe to bring further updates on Community Fund in future.	Open
8. Lisa Bush to share slides from the meeting.	Closed
9. Vicky to integrate revisions to ICG report and finalise with Lottie.	Pending
10. Lottie to confirm details asap about site visit and 2026 meetings.	Open
OPEN/ONGOING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES	
1. Craig to update ICG Terms of Reference and skills matrix for ICG.	Open
2. Craig/Vicky to follow up with Lottie/Allan to schedule an LTDS session with the ICG in the autumn.	Open
3. Smart meters to be included in future ICG agenda.	Open
4. AW colleagues to circulate performance update ahead of ICG meetings.	Ongoing
5. Lottie/Vicky to find space in the ICG agenda to talk about effluent reuse in future.	Open
6. Allan to share review of previous DWMP, if feasible.	Open
7. ICG members and AW colleagues to recommend potential ICG recruits from their networks; Vicky/Lottie to liaise on recruitment.	Ongoing
8. AW to follow up of Project Chrysalis/customer service implications at future meeting.	Open
9. AW to include PFAS/Environment Strategy in future meeting.	Open
10. Mark to share details about Safer Every Day campaign.	Ongoing
11. Darren to provide further updates on Gate 3 reservoir process.	Open
12. Lottie to make recommendations regarding recruitment & induction of ICG members as well as recommending behaviour change experts.	Ongoing
13. AW to share regular updates with ICG in 2025 about reservoirs, strategic pipeline (SPA), Project Nexus progress, Pollution Incident Reduction Plan.	Ongoing
14. John Vinson/CCW to bring customer complaint review to future meeting(s).	Pending
15. AW/ICG to agree new plans for site visit in 2025.	Open

Meeting minutes

Item	Action
<p>1. <u>Welcome from ICG Chair</u></p> <p>Craig Bennett, Chair of the Independent Challenge Group (ICG), welcomed Rick Butler from the Environment Agency to his first ICG meeting, taking over the role from Beth Kenna. Rick introduced himself as EA's water industry account manager, covering Anglian Water.</p> <p>Minutes from the 18 July ICG meeting were approved, pending a few minor updates.</p> <p>Update from the Strategic Planning Task and Finish Group</p> <p>Geoff Darch gave an update on the inaugural meeting of the Strategic Planning Task and Finish Group on 18 July. The group's aim is to provide an overview of different statutory plans for the next period and to delve into emerging catchment-based thinking, integrating the premises of the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) and Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) in specific geographic areas.</p> <p>Geoff reported good attendance from senior stakeholders – from regulators, councils, NGOs, academia. ICG Chair Craig Bennett was able to attend the meeting and Vicky Anning (secretariat for the ICG) also recorded minutes.</p> <p>The focus of the first meeting was the DWMP as well as specifics around boundaries, future scenarios and performance indicators.</p> <p>The next meeting (on 22 Sept) would include more information around water recycling and potential non-potable water use. A third meeting was scheduled for 17 November. ICG members were welcome to attend.</p> <p>Questions</p> <p>Joanne Lancaster said the approach was a good solution to address gaps in the long-term planning for water. She asked about the lifespan of the group? How would the group know they had achieved what they wanted to achieve? She felt there was a high risk of mission creep if the TORs were not defined tightly.</p> <p>Geoff responded that there were certain requirements for engagement on the DWMP, which were addressed by the group. For now, the group's role was two-fold (but this would be revisited after the Cunliffe report):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) discharging responsibilities for DWMP engagement b) fostering space with innovative thinkers to help inform where AW would like to get to with geographically based planning. <p>Joanne Lancaster said it was important that some of the agencies that weren't represented in the group were reminded that their input was mission critical.</p>	

	<p>Update from Customer Board</p> <p>Lottie Williams said that AW has been realigning the Customer Board (CB) to tie in with the emerging ICG TORs and would be reviewing the CB Terms of Reference to make sure they're aligned.</p> <p>CB members had a successful in-person visit to AW's Lincoln office in May and AW were actively looking at ways to engage members in topics, delivering a two-way engagement on issues.</p> <p>Action: Lottie to share some of the feedback from CB members following the site visit.</p> <p>Lottie was also working with AW's new Head of Customer Experience, Scott Snowden, to plan for future CB engagement in the evolving regulatory space.</p> <p>There was a CB meeting planned for that afternoon with two key agenda items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumer Involvement Rule and potential consultation response - Giving feedback on the Community Fund (also on the ICG agenda). <p>Forward planning for 2026 was ongoing, looking at key decision-making milestones and dovetailing with ICG/AW Board.</p> <p>Don Maher added that AW went through real-life incident response with CB members and gained a lot of useful customer perspectives.</p> <p>John Vinson asked whether AW would be able to share that information with the ICG.</p> <p>Action: AW to share information on incident responses shared with CB.</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>Nathan Richardson said he found the update on incident response in the CB minutes very useful. He also found the CB slide decks and pre-reading materials helpful, particularly the "On Your Radar" section, which looks ahead to what's coming up in the next three months.</p> <p>Lottie Williams responded that that section came from direct CB feedback. The format and content of the updates was still being refined.</p> <p>Vicky Anning mentioned that she had been circulating minutes/papers from both the Customer Board and Task and Finish Group to ICG members and was glad that Nathan had found those useful.</p> <p>Craig Bennett added the increasing alignment between the groups was really positive and useful.</p>	<p>Action LW</p> <p>Action AW</p>
2.	<u>Company update</u>	

	<p>Ofwat enforcement action</p> <p>Background: On 29 July 2025, Ofwat proposed a £62.8m enforcement package following its finding that Anglian Water had breached its legal obligations in operating its wastewater treatment works and network. More info here</p> <p>Claire Russell – Anglian Water’s Legal Director – explained that all companies had been investigated by Ofwat. Four of five companies had agreed formal undertakings in lieu of a fine (Thames Water accepted to pay a fine). In each case, Ofwat has published detailed notes of findings, including a range of compliance data. More info here</p> <p>Claire then turned to the challenge questions that ICG members had submitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. What failures in Anglian Water’s oversight contributed to the enforcement action, and how might governance structures be strengthened to prevent recurrence?</i> <i>ii. Given Anglian Water’s prior £100m investment commitment, what lessons can be drawn about the adequacy of past measures to address spills and overflows?</i> <i>iii. What impact (if any) will this enforcement action have on customer bills?</i> <p>Claire responded that Ofwat has criticised all companies for focusing on performance data associated with ODI compliance and EPA performance. It seemed to be universal that companies had been focusing on metrics underpinning those areas rather than looking at more detailed permit compliance. She said that, historically, there had been less focus on measures like discharges to storm tanks and that was at the heart of Ofwat’s investigation.</p> <p>In terms of steps taken to address the issues, AW had made several governance changes to make sure this area was monitored more closely going forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) AW had appointed a Head of Flow Compliance (a new role). 2) AW had set up an executive committee (pollutions and flow board) to monitor compliance of permits; meeting monthly. 3) AW’s Board had also established a new committee to focus on these issues, meeting quarterly. <p>Claire suggested that the second challenge question would be addressed to Emily Timmins, who would be attending the meeting for Agenda item 4.</p> <p>In terms of impact on customer bills – in the short term, funding was coming entirely via shareholders so there would be no direct impact on customer bills. Ofwat has made it clear that customers must not pay twice for compliance.</p> <p>In developing the long-term compliance plan, Claire explained there needed to be specific regard to affordability. The short-term focus would be investigations into causes of non-compliance. In many cases, the solution would be operational (e.g. a capital maintenance fix), which would be funded by customers under the price review process. In some cases, investigations might highlight the need for a capital solution (some of which may be covered under WINEP. Some of these measures may need to be accelerated in AMP8).</p>	
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	<p>Looking to the future, Claire said it was reasonable to assume that some of the capital solutions may be to install additional storm tanks, which would likely be funded in future plans.</p> <p>In summary, in the short term there would be no impact on customer bills, but in the longer term, there may be some impact on customer bills, which would be delivered through the normal business planning process.</p> <p>Questions</p> <p>Joanne Lancaster highlighted this would be a sensitive issue for some time to come. She had read with interest about work going on in Yaxley and wanted to hear more about it. She asked how AW would manage people's expectations around the Community Fund, which was designed to support environmental and social causes?</p> <p>Claire Russell responded that there was a specific item on the agenda relating to the Community Fund (Agenda item 3) and she would defer to her colleague Angela McCabe on that.</p> <p>Lottie Williams responded that there were plans afoot to arrange a site visit to Yaxley, which was postponed from 2024.</p> <p>Nathan Richardson asked whether there was a parallel EA investigation ongoing?</p> <p>Claire Russell responded that Ofwat's investigation was closed but there was still an EA investigation ongoing into companies' permit compliance. There was some overlap but timelines weren't clear.</p> <p>CMA update</p> <p>Darren Rice reported that AW was expecting an update/provisional findings from the Competition and Markets Authority w/c 22 September. Companies and third parties would then have four weeks to respond. He would update the ICG as soon as there were any developments and signpost to any summaries or AW responses.</p> <p>Final Cunliffe Review had been published in the interim. It would be interesting to see how strong cross references would be, particularly for recommendations around asset health, returns and performance framework.</p> <p>Action: AW to share updates on CMA determination with ICG as soon as available.</p> <p>Update on Cunliffe Review</p> <p>Alice Piure gave a brief update on the Cunliffe Review, saying there had been a lot of developments since she attended the ICG's July meeting. The final report from Cunliffe, which was published in late July (400 pages, 88 recommendations), was an impressive piece of work and a step in the right direction.</p>	<p>Action AW</p>
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	<p>AW was pleased to see that key concerns had been recognised and discussed in the final report. It was clear that the commission saw their role as setting out a coherent package of reforms that were designed to put the water sector onto the right footing for the future. There was a strong focus on resilience, which AW was pleased to see.</p> <p>The scale of ambition was really striking. However, it would take time to put the changes into practice. Alice said there was quite a lot of ambiguity in the recommendations and there was still a lot of work to do/a long way to go to define some of the details.</p> <p>If everything proposed in the report was implemented, the regulatory system would look very different in future.</p> <p>There was a big emphasis on making the planning process more streamlined. And there was also a package of reforms for companies to make sure the sector could attract the investment needed. This included a section on corporate culture and governance to make sure companies were acting in the public interest.</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>Craig Bennett pointed out that there had also been a change in Defra's Secretary of State in the latest cabinet reshuffle.</p> <p>Nathan Richardson said it would be interesting to see how the implementation went forward. He was interested in links with the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the impact on investments if there were changes in that legislation.</p> <p>Alice Piure responded that there had been a lot of discussions internally about transition over the next price review. She said it was important that the government set out the national water strategy sooner rather than later so that companies know they were putting their investment in the right areas/towards a shared national ambition.</p> <p>Joanne Lancaster felt the Cunliffe Report was an informative read. She asked whether AW was proposing any immediate changes in its operations, governance etc in response?</p> <p>Darren Rice replied that there was a lot of emphasis on Defra's transition plan (over 5-7 years), which had been acknowledged as very tricky. It may not be possible to get all the ducks in a row for the next price review. There was a White Paper planned for autumn/winter, incorporating a proposed timetable.</p> <p>Darren thought there were some changes that companies could be getting on with quite quickly but there was a lot to do. AW's Board was very animated and engaged in the process.</p> <p>Rick Butler asked how AW would respond in terms of getting the message across to the public about how AW's purpose-led corporate culture would change in response to Cunliffe?</p>	
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	<p>Darren Rice responded that underlying Cunliffe, there were two things that came through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic reset of communications in the sector, which was a core part of restoring trust; clearly there needed to be an emphasis on continuing to improve on performance to open up conversations. • Shifting to a supervisory approach to regulation could also be very complex. It would involve sophisticated reform and would take a lot of time to get there. <p>Don Maher pointed out that there were some proposed impacts to CCW that he asked John Vinson to talk about.</p> <p>John Vinson said that, under the proposals, CCW was likely to become an Ombudsman, which was welcome. However, CCW was challenging the proposal to transfer their advocacy role to Citizen’s Advice.</p> <p>Ofwat consultation on consumer involvement rule</p> <p>Darren Rice explained that, through the Water Special Measures Act, Ofwat had powers to set rules on remuneration and consumer roles in decision making. This was a live consultation where Ofwat were seeking views on the wording and implementation of the rule, which tried to set out clear lines and expectations of consumer involvement in decisions affecting them.</p> <p>AW was broadly supportive of the direction of travel. There were a few questions around how to define “a material decision”. AW’s current arrangements (with ICG and Customer Board) were consistent with the proposals from Ofwat. There were some questions around the Consumer Panels and how those might work in practice alongside existing AW arrangements.</p> <p>Don Maher added that AW had already had a lot of elements from Ofwat’s proposals in place, but bringing them all together under one umbrella was the next step. AW was very supportive of getting customers involved in decisions and were talking to Customer Board as well as ICG about the rule and the consultation.</p> <p>Craig Bennett said it was encouraging that Ofwat had included positive feedback around ICGs and that there was a clear role for ICGs to support consumer panels as “experts”.</p> <p>Nathan Richardson (via the chat) said that a refreshed version of the Customer Engagement Synthesis report used in previous AMPs could be very useful for tracking/reporting customer influence on decision making.</p> <p>Vicky Anning reminded ICG members that the deadline for submitting views was 1 Oct.</p> <p>Update on drought status</p> <p>Don Maher gave a brief update on the current drought status, which had been covered in more detail in ICG pre-reading materials. Rainfall over last few weeks</p>	
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	<p>had given some reprieve after one of the driest summers on record. Reservoirs were low (at 72%), which was concerning.</p> <p>Although it had been a difficult summer, Don mentioned AW had been successful in staving off a temporary use ban. It was testament to investments made, he said.</p> <p>However, he emphasised that AW needed a wet winter to replenish supplies and recover in time for next summer. AW's drought management team was continuing to meet.</p> <p>Questions/comments</p> <p>Nathan Richardson (via the chat) asked what the situation was in Hartlepool.</p> <p>Don Maher responded (via the chat) that Hartlepool relied on groundwater rather than surface water so was in a good position.</p> <p>Joanne Lancaster reiterated that people's perception of water as a precious resource needed to be addressed, particularly during dry summers. She would be interested to know how the company was going to tackle this (alongside tools such as smart meters and tackling leakage).</p> <p>Lottie Williams agreed that behaviour change needed to be addressed at a national (as well as company) level. She suggested this was something that could be looked at in a future ICG meeting, including water efficiency campaign and work at a consortium level.</p> <p>Action: Perception of water/behaviour change to be addressed at future meeting.</p> <p>There was also discussion in the chat around an EA study looking at the impact of temporary use bans on water usage this summer, including comms impacts.</p> <p>John Vinson asked (via the chat) about results of a tariff trial that might demonstrate a behavioural response.</p> <p>Don Maher said that AW would be reviewing the results in October and there had been discussions about potentially extending the trial.</p> <p>Action: Lottie Williams said she would look into sharing an update with the ICG.</p>	<p>Action for future agenda</p> <p>Action LW</p>
3.	<p><u>Community Fund</u></p> <p>Challenge question: <i>What role will the £5.8m Community Fund play in repairing trust and addressing the environmental damage caused (and what role could/will the ICG play)?</i></p> <p>Angela McCabe, AW's Head of Community and Stakeholder Engagement, joined the call. She had circulated a paper to ICG members ahead of the meeting explaining more details about the fund and the proposed ICG role (with an ICG member sitting on the selection panel).</p>	

	<p>Angela wanted to get initial feedback from ICG members as details of the fund were developed. She explained that AW wanted to rebuild trust across impacted communities but the fund was for the entire region. There were some criteria that Ofwat had put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For the better of water restitution/environment - Bringing environmental and social prosperity across the region <p>Comments</p> <p>Joanne Lancaster explained that her background was in local government and she had experience of community funding, including the harsh reality of meeting people's expectations. While £5.8m was a large chunk of money, it wouldn't go very far given the geography. She suggested that criteria needed to be as tight as possible at the outset in order to manage expectations/narrow the funnel of applications.</p> <p>Angela McCabe said that AW was working with the Cambridge Community Foundation, who had also recommended keeping the criteria narrow.</p> <p>Nathan Richardson asked what happened after the award? How would the impact be reported to show the fund had made positive difference?</p> <p>Angela McCabe said that one of the criteria was about the legacy the fund might leave. There was also a requirement to report to Ofwat every six months.</p> <p>Craig Bennett welcomed the opportunity for an ICG member to sit on the Community Fund. The role of the ICG would be to have a holistic view on many of these issues and to curate that for Anglian Water's Board.</p> <p>Action: Angela McCabe said she would bring further updates to the ICG in due course.</p>	<p>Action AMcC</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Performance update</u></p> <p>Brian Ebdon gave a performance update after circulating slides in advance, focusing on Basecamp 2 scorecard tracking against key targets/metrics to end of Year 1.</p> <p><i>Safety performance</i> this year had not been where AW wanted it to be. The year started with a number of incidents that were puzzling given the amount of work in this area. Brian reported there had been far fewer incidents this month, although there was one serious incident in September, which would impact performance.</p> <p><i>ODI performance</i> – there had been a big shift since the ICG last saw AW's position. AW was now targeting £51m in penalties in Year 1. This means that, even with increased investments in key areas, AW would be unable to meet Ofwat targets. AW was now looking at a nearly £70m penalty position in Year 1. The reasons were related to pressure on the water network. Brian explained that dry weather impacted a number of metrics (leakage, interruption to supply, mains repairs and water quality contacts), which accounted for most of the shift in ODI penalty.</p>	

	<p>Soil moisture level was still very dry for this time of year and AW was waiting to see what might happen going into autumn/winter. Work baskets were higher than they'd ever been at this time of year. AW was going into winter in a high risk position. Brian said, if there were cold snaps, there was potential for the penalty to be higher than £70m.</p> <p><i>Financials</i> – this was a good news story, in spite of the red showing on the chart. AW had been able to spend more than budgeted, which was a big achievement given the budget was close to £2bn in Year 1. AW now needed to adjust the capital forecast and budget to make sure they didn't go over budget in Year 2.</p> <p>John Vinson asked about the risk that something might go wrong later on in the AMP, risking that AW couldn't recover their position? In other words, what's the down side of making hay while the sun shines?</p> <p>Brian Ebdon responded that one of the things AW was managing was headroom i.e. how much ability the company had to raise funding. Brian would love to spend more to get ahead but it wasn't feasible. That meant there was always a risk that next year might look different to previous years, in terms of risk profile.</p> <p>John Vinson asked what customer comms were planned to explain some of the disruption related to capital projects underway. For example, some water companies were reporting at a local level via customer bills.</p> <p>Brian Ebdon suggested that might be a separate item to come back to at a future ICG meeting – bringing a hyperlocal element to customer comms.</p> <p>Emily Timmins reminded ICG of the new partner organisation PDP – AW had invested heavily in programme capability to help bring together investments so as to minimise disruption. They had also organised hyperlocal target comms.</p> <p>Brian Ebdon went back to performance update, looking at Opex. Summer had been extreme, breaking many records and going beyond worst-case scenario models on dryness of soil.</p> <p><i>Opex</i> was tracking reasonably well but AW had spent more than they would like dealing with the summer conditions. However, they were not too far adrift at this point. If it was a normal winter, he said AW should finish in a good position.</p> <p><i>Reservoirs</i> were on track and progressing well, with Gate 3 on track for next year.</p> <p><i>Efficiencies</i> – one of AW's key targets was to make £250m efficiencies in overheads to reinvest into water recycling. AW was performing well on this, which had led to some tough conversations. There had been a redundancy programme in senior management and layers below. There was now line of sight to 75% efficiencies.</p> <p><i>SAP</i> – captures AW financials and systems of record. AW would be migrating to a new platform at the end of October. This would mainly impact financials and project management areas, including invoices.</p>	
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	<p><i>Business capability</i> – AW was scoring well on this measure. They were running programmes to make sure key capabilities were maturing at the expected rate.</p> <p><i>Capital delivery</i> – AW was ahead of target, helping to drive efficiencies.</p> <p>Action: Vicky Anning asked Brian to share the updated version of his slide (which included newer data than the slide circulated with the pre-reading pack).</p> <p>Craig Bennett thanked Brian for the clearly laid out slide and commentary.</p> <p>Joanne Lancaster asked about ODI delivery gap: was there an ambition to drive the penalty down? She also asked whether it would be possible to share a break down of the baskets within the ODI metrics.</p> <p>Brian Ebdon responded that everything was pushed to the highest level to meet targets on every metric.</p> <p>Action: Brian Ebdon to share detailed breakdown of ODI targets/metrics.</p> <p>Emily Timmins pointed out that AW was ahead of target on external and internal flooding metrics, which AW was focused on. Likewise on spills, AW was also ahead of target</p> <p>Rick Butler added how useful he found it to see AW's performance on a page. He asked whether it was possible for AW to share specifics around business capabilities. Did it include maturity of asset management and how that linked to asset health?</p> <p>Brian Ebdon responded that he could share AW's business capabilities framework and how that's broken down. In terms of asset management, this is split into several different categories. They also have an asset management maturity framework, proscribed by Ofwat, that might be more useful for the ICG.</p> <p>Action: Brian Ebdon to share the asset management maturity framework.</p> <p>Pollution Incident Reduction Plan</p> <p><i>Challenge question: Could you give us an update on timelines for reducing/eliminating all serious pollutions – with reference to the Get River Positive pledge to eliminate serious pollutions by 2025 and reduce less serious pollutions by 45% and spills from storm overflows to an average of 20 per year by 2025 and the company's latest Zero Escapes Strategy, which committed to delivering zero escapes by 2050 (ICG members were invited to contribute to this strategy at the April 2024 ICG meeting but unfortunately this has not yet been followed up).</i></p> <p>Emily Timmins explained that the ICG would be invited for a site visit to Yaxley in November, to look at the Peterborough catchment as an example of the drivers of pollutions.</p>	<p>Action BE</p> <p>Action BE</p> <p>Action BE</p>
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	<p>Emily gave a brief introduction to developments since she last spoke to the ICG, including the rebuild of the new Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) in readiness for the final determination to land.</p> <p>AW had made a massive investment in new root cause analysis in 2023 and also looked at compounding factors, with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) catchment investigation 2) fast response 3) better data and insight <p>AWS gave an additional £240m across AMP on top of £100m investment targeted at pollutions.</p> <p>Lisa Bush gave a brief overview of the purpose of AW's approach to this year's PIRP, which was a specific, discrete lens of overall Totex plan for the AMP, including internal and external flooding.</p> <p>Three primary causes of flooding were looked at: blockages, asset failure, hydraulic overload.</p> <p>More detail was offered in the slides, which would be circulated after the meeting.</p> <p>Action: Lisa Bush to circulate slides.</p> <p>John Vinson asked whether blockages were broken down into subcategories (e.g. sewer collapse, customer induced etc).</p> <p>Lisa Bush explained that root causes for all blockages were investigated and she would go into more detail on this later. She said the water industry needed to be in a place where they were predicting where a pollution may take place.</p> <p>In 2025, blockages were still the leading root cause of pollutions and electrical failure was another cause that was driving performance.</p> <p>AW's interventions were already making a difference. Blockage performance was heading in the right direction. That had played through in internal and external sewer flooding performance but pollution performance had been stubborn. 60% of events in 2025 had occurred in new locations/catchments.</p> <p>Out of 1.7m manhole covers across the AW region, AW have been able to install monitors in locations within 25 metres of a water course (16,000 manhole covers).</p> <p>86% of AW's high-risk asset base was now covered in some way by a sewer monitor as part of AW's predictive analytics. AW was sector leading in this regard.</p> <p>From 50,000 sewer monitors installed, just 33 of them led to a pollution. Through monitoring, AW has a higher level of understanding at a micro level to try and predict where pollutions might take place.</p>	<p>Action LB</p>
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	<p>John Vinson asked where harm to receiving bodies fitted into this picture? He suggested having a rank of receiving bodies that might cause greater harm might be a way of targeting pollutions.</p> <p>Emily Timmins explained that AW had a risk criticality matrix, which defined interventions based on impact. Every risk was triaged – AW invested more monitors against bathing water or SSSIs, even though risk from modelling was low.</p> <p>Lisa Bush said there was lots of work going on in terms of prevention, from education through to enforcement. More would be explained at the site visit.</p> <p>In response to the ICG challenge question, Lisa talked about the glide path – forecasting a 46% reduction by the end of the AMP.</p> <p>Emily Timmins also explained that AW was using AI and predictive analytics to help service customer indications down to the level of every single manhole.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>Joanne Lancaster asked what AW was going to do with that level of detail? How was AW going to engage communities and stakeholders with this information. She hoped this could be addressed during the site visit.</p> <p>Craig Bennett also posed a challenge question to be addressed during the site visit: how does AW build models as to what to expect as “normal”. Was AW planning for anything more extreme than had been previously experienced?</p> <p>Emily Timmins explained that each five-year plan took into account some of the variability seen in recent years (e.g. factors in two very extreme years within the five years).</p> <p>Brian Ebdon said it was a good challenge for the whole water industry. AW used to run on a 20-year average weather scenario. Now they were running five-year forward projections because 10-year average was no longer viable.</p> <p>Emily Timmins said the reality of next five years was riding out the storm. Over the next 2/3 years, they would be planning for next 20/30 years through DWMP/WRMP, which would look at future scenarios.</p> <p>Nathan Richardson (in chat) asked the following: in the PIRP you are forecasting significantly missing the total pollution PCL target throughout the AMP despite the work described. How come? Is this because previous AMP targets were missed?</p> <p>These questions and more would be addressed during the November site visit, as time was short.</p>	
5.	<u>ICG reboot</u>	

	<p>Craig Bennett gave a very brief overview of what had been going on at a sector level regarding independent challenge groups; much work was going on in the background and there was now a more positive outlook towards ICGs.</p> <p>Craig was expecting a report from Independens around what a proposed mandate for ICGs might look like. Mood music was positive.</p> <p>Craig had held meetings with AW Chair Dr Ros Rivaz and Darren Rice to talk about the ICG TORs. He would update TORs accordingly and hoped that they could be adopted by AW's Board this autumn.</p> <p>He was then hoping to be able to proceed with ICG recruitment in October, with interviews and appointments in November.</p> <p>John Vinson added that Consumer Panels were an Ofwat requirement and ICGs will have a role in supporting them. He felt it was good to have more sources of customer information and emphasised that the triangulation of customer views was important.</p> <p>He also highlighted that AW's ICG was a model of a good and well functioning ICG and one of the leading ICGs in the country.</p> <p>ICG report</p> <p>Vicky Anning was integrating final comments from AW colleagues and would integrate updates from today's meeting.</p>	Action VA
7.	<p><u>AOB/Closing comments</u></p> <p>Lottie Williams said Craig had suggested that the Customer Board join ICG's site visit on 6 November; the focus would be on pollution incidents.</p> <p>Action: Lottie to confirm details as soon as possible.</p> <p>Action: Lottie to circulate more details about 2026 meetings.</p> <p>Customer involvement rule: due to lack of time, discussion was taken offline.</p>	<p>Action LW</p> <p>Action LW</p>