

Our Environmental Vision: “To be a leading example of good environmental management in the Agbar Group”

This document sets out our environmental goals for the next 25 years.

Governance

Reporting

We will continue to report on our environmental performance and promote this information throughout the Company. We will continue to refine our reporting and work in an open way with other stakeholders such as Water UK, OFWAT, Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England and UKWIR to ensure that our reporting is at industry best practice. Our environmental performance will be reported to the Bristol Water Board and throughout Agbar Group and we will publish formal annual reports giving details of our monitoring. We will develop further targets and measure our performance against these as the science develops.

Supply Chain

We will continue to work with our suppliers on waste reduction, and develop measurements of the environmental impact of our supply chain. Where we have a formal partnership arrangement with another business we will require these partners to meet our own standards for reporting and environmental management.

Stakeholder involvement

We will work to develop our existing good relationships with external stakeholders such as Local Authorities, developers, regulators and our customers. We will also continue our work on staff engagement through regular environmental initiatives and departmental environmental representatives, and ensure that all our staff understand that good environmental management is one of the underlying principles of the Company’s operation.

Climate Change

Carbon reduction: Overall Target

We will reduce the carbon impact of our operations by 50% by 2050 and we will engage in the Carbon Reduction Commitment to reduce the carbon impact of our operations by at least 26% by 2025. We will measure this through best practice methods agreed with our regulators and make the information available to the public.

Carbon Reduction: Planning New Investment

Our cost-benefit analysis for investment over the next 25 years will include the whole-life carbon impact of planned schemes, which we will use to calculate the greatest benefit to the environment and our customers. We will concentrate particularly on energy-efficient technologies and innovative treatment systems which require lower levels of chemical usage, and our larger schemes will be subject to a formal Environmental Impact Assessment. We will also investigate the potential for sustainable energy use by the Company and the impact this will have on our overall carbon footprint

Adapting to Climate Change

Climate change science continues to develop but it is becoming clear that some change is now inevitable. Water supply is particularly vulnerable to climate change as it will affect both the demand for water and its availability, so we will plan for these changes in order to ensure that we continue to meet our fundamental obligation of providing a good supply of safe water. In particular we will develop a more flexible infrastructure and greater storage of raw water, and ensure that our new buildings and other assets use up-to-date and energy efficient technologies.

We will also increase the education and support we provide, particularly to the young, to help reduce the demand for water and promote a water-saving culture among our customers. We believe that reducing the amount of water required is the single most effective way to reduce the overall impact of water supply, and we will for this reason encourage the use of water meters by our customers, which we believe will improve the efficient use of water in the home.

As the effects of climate change become better understood, we will continue to review our plans to ensure that we will provide the most appropriate and equitable solutions to this challenge.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity Action Plans

We will continue to manage all our land holdings in ways sympathetic to the needs of wildlife, and work around sites which are important for biodiversity will be carried out in a way laid down in formal Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs), which identify measures we can take to protect and improve biodiversity.

In the next two years BAPs will be completed at all our major treatment works, and all of the BAPs we use will continue to be updated through regular surveys. Any new findings will be added to the BAP species lists, so our understanding of our responsibilities will continue to grow.

Special sites

We are responsible for many sites of special importance, including 19 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). All of these sites, covering over 900 hectares, are in 'favourable' status, which is at the forefront of the UK water industry. We will continue our responsible management of these assets, including working where we can with other stakeholders whose actions may affect the condition of an SSSI. In particular, we will carry out further monitoring to establish where land management by other people is leading to a deterioration in water quality, so this can be addressed by the appropriate regulators.

New Investment

Where major new schemes like new reservoirs are planned, we will work with stakeholders such as the Environment Agency and Natural England to maximise their potential as biodiversity sites. One such site is the proposed new reservoir at Cheddar, where we will ensure that the design of the scheme optimises its benefit for wildlife. Smaller schemes will also be explored for their potential to create a biodiversity benefit.

Waste

Leakage

Reducing leakage is a highly effective way of reducing our environmental impact, because it reduces the amount of water we need to supply and all the impacts associated with this. However, the work required to find and repair leaks has its own environmental impact and we do not believe it will ever be possible to reduce leakage to zero. We will however keep our rate of leakage at or below the agreed economic level, and work with our regulators towards a lower level which will account for the full environmental impact of water lost.

Reducing leakage is a fundamental objective of the Company and we will continue to use the best and most modern technologies to ensure that our rate of leakage is at the lowest level which can reasonably be attained.

Landfill and recycling

Having reduced our waste to landfill by approximately 80% in the last five years, most of our waste handling is now at best practice. We will continue to follow the waste hierarchy of prevent-reduce-reuse-recycle-dispose as a guiding principle for all our waste management and continue to work with our suppliers to ensure that as many of our purchases as possible are delivered in returnable packaging. Where we produce recyclable waste this will be sold and the profits will be ringfenced for environmental initiatives.

New materials

We will continue to investigate the use of new technology such as soil stabilisation techniques for backfilling excavated material into trenches and groundworks. We will work with Local Authorities and seek to resolve any concerns about the use of this material for backfilling.

Staff awareness

We will carry out more waste awareness sessions with our staff to increase awareness of waste management within the Company, and we will continue to monitor and control our waste streams.

Conservation, Access & Recreation

We will increase public access to Company sites, particularly at the Mendip lakes. This will include a new cycle path at Chew Valley Lake and in the longer term we will make new walks available at Blagdon Lake. As the second reservoir at Cheddar is created, we will increase the range of recreational uses available to the public at this reservoir.

We will continue to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice on Conservation, Access & Recreation and we will voluntarily exceed these requirements where we can reasonably create additional benefit for the community.

We will increase our education programme to improve customer awareness of water efficiency and environmental protection, and we will work with our customers and other stakeholders to increase involvement in this and other community initiatives.

Travel

Over the next 25 years we will work continuously to reduce the distance we travel. We will increase our use of remote automated systems such as automated meter reading and monitoring, and use a computerised mobile working system to optimise our transport efficiency.

We will operate from a single administrative support centre and rationalise smaller treatment sites into fewer larger sites; we will maximise our use of teleconferencing for internal and external meetings; and we will ensure that teleworking is available for as many staff as possible, to reduce the commuter mileage travelled by our staff.

We will continue to promote non-car travel and car-sharing for staff and visitors through our Green Travel Plan and we will provide bicycles and suitable safety equipment for travel at our larger sites.

Where vehicles are used, we will ensure that these are of the most efficient and lowest-emission types available for the job in hand, including hybrid vehicles and other emerging technologies.

Abstraction and Discharge

Abstraction

We will comply with all the conditions of our abstraction licences, and we will go beyond these requirements where a benefit to the environment can reasonably be created. Where abstraction meets our licence terms but is having a detrimental impact on the environment, we will voluntarily reduce abstraction from the water sources involved unless it causes a significant impact on our ability to provide a safe and reliable supply of water.

We will work to identify water sources where land use in the catchment has led to deterioration in the water. Where deterioration has occurred we will work with the stakeholders involved to attain the most sustainable solution available: preference will be given to policies and projects that reduce pollution and prevent deterioration, instead of installing intensive water treatment technology where a water source has deteriorated.

Consented discharges

Where we discharge any waste water to the environment, we will ensure this meets the requirement of discharge consents set by our regulators. If we can reasonably recycle the waste to provide a useful material we will do so. We already recycle some waste water to remove the sediment it contains, and the dried sediment is applied to farmland to improve soil condition.

Unscheduled discharges

Where discharge of waste water is necessary (for instance, from a flooded excavation or a burst water main) we will control this to minimise, and wherever possible prevent, any negative impact on the environment. We will also require our business partners to follow this approach, and if any pollution event occurs this will immediately be reported to the relevant operational manager and the Environment Manager. A policy of open reporting to the appropriate regulator will be followed at all times.