

MINUTES OF THE WATERSHARE+ GROUP ONLINE PUBLIC MEETING (Public)

Online (Zoom)

11 August 2026 at 18.00pm

Panel Members Present

Lord Matthew Taylor (MT)	WaterShare+ Panel Chair (Chair)
Peaches Golding OBE CStJ (PG)	WaterShare+ Panel Deputy Chair
David Smith (DS)	WaterShare+ Deputy Chair for Bristol Region
Louise Coulton (LC)	WaterShare+ Chair for Bournemouth Region
Nick Buckland OBE (NB)	WaterShare+ Chair for Devon Region
Dinah Cox OBE (DC)	WaterShare+ Deputy Chair for Devon Region
Lisa Ackerley (LA)	WaterShare+ Deputy Chair for Cornwall Region
Robert Gould (RG)	WaterShare+ Deputy Chair for Bournemouth Region
Carole Theobald (CT)	WaterShare+ Chair for Cornwall Region
Steve Crabb (SC)	Co-Chair SES Customer and Environmental Scrutiny Panel and WaterShare+ Co-Chair for SES Region
Michael Barnes (MB)	CCW External Advisor
Kevin Ward (KW)	EA External Advisor

Pennon Group plc Present

Keith Haslett (KH)	Group Chief Executive Officer
Ian Cain (IC)	CEO Customer & Retail Markets
Richard Stanbrook (RS)	General Manager of Drinking Water Services, Bristol and Bournemouth
Richard Price (RP)	Managing Director, Wastewater Services
Ian Lake (IL)	Head of Developer Services
Ketan Hindocha (KH)	Director of Customer Care
Dani Twelvetree (DT)	Director of Customer Communications & Engagement
Steve Lowrie (SL)	Lead Media Relations Manager
David Smith (DS)	Natural Resources Manager
Becca Lee (BL)	Community Manager
Henry Craven (HC)	Schedule & Event Coordinator

Technical support

Emma Sellers (ES)	Select Brief
Paul Hammond (PH)	Select Brief

No. Customers Present

Customers	25
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Apologies

Fergus Mitchell (FM)	Natural England External Advisor
Alison Thompson (AT)	Co-Chair SES Customer and Environmental Scrutiny Panel and WaterShare+ Co-Chair for SES Region

1.	<u>Welcome & Introductions – Overview of WaterShare+</u>
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
1.2	MT provided an overview of the role of the WaterShare+ customer panel, explaining that it independently challenges and scrutinises Pennon Group companies on behalf of customers, including South West Water, Bristol Water, Bournemouth Water and SES Water. He outlined the panel's work with the Environment Agency, Natural England and CCW and explained the purpose of the public meeting.
2.	<u>Welcome and Company Introductions</u>
2.1	Keith Haslett, Chief Executive Officer of Pennon Group, introduced himself and the company representatives present: • Richard Stanbrook, Water Services • Ian Cain, Customer and Retail Services • Richard Price, Wastewater Services • Ian Lake, Developer Services Keith thanked attendees for taking part and encouraged open discussion and feedback.
3.	<u>Drinking Water Overview and Q&A</u>
3.1	RS provided an overview of water services performance and future investment plans, including: • Supplying approximately 930 million litres of water daily across operational regions. • Ongoing leakage reduction programmes. • Investment in technology including acoustic loggers, satellite monitoring, AI-enabled leak detection and smart metering. • Planned replacement of water mains and lead service pipes. • Progress on the Cheddar 2 and 3 water resource schemes.
3.1	Customer 1 asked how South West Water coordinates repairs and maintenance activities with local councils, sharing their experience that a road was repeatedly dug up first by the council and then by South West Water which was inconvenient for residents. Response: • RS apologised for this incident and explained that the company works very closely with councils through Streetworks permitting system used by all utility companies. • Highway permits are obtained from local authorities before planned works commence, the council provides us with the slot and monitors the work. Emergency works are managed through specific emergency permit processes. • KH added that with approximately 28,000 leaks were repaired during the previous year, which is a huge amount of permits through the system. • RS explained that he couldn't speak on behalf of the council and how they coordinate activities but confirmed that monthly coordination meetings are held with councils

	regarding major works and this will be feedback to the local council.
3.2	Customer 2 asked whether taking an extremely aggressive approach to eliminating leaks would remove the need for additional reservoirs and whether desalination and reverse osmosis technologies are being considered by the company? Response: • RS explained that leakage reduction remains a significant priority, but some level of leakage will always occur due to network size and ground movement however the company can do more and is doing more to fix leaks. The company is investing in detection methodologies and acoustic loggers and rolling out smart meters so customer side leakage can be detected quickly and the company can provide support. • RS explained that the company is looking at utilising satellite technology where we pinpoint leaks from above ground and maximising the use of AI to support reduction. • Whilst leakage is always disappointing and in Devon and Cornwall last year around 110 megalitres per day of leakage occurred we are looking to reduce this by a further 64 megalitres in the network using this new technology. • RS explained that population growth and future demand mean additional water resource schemes remain necessary. • KH thanked the customer for his comments and explained that the Water Resources Management Plan, Water resources management plan South West Water, looks at the future demand against supply. Whilst the company needs to reduce leakage the company is replacing 460km of water mains over the next few years. • KH explained that desalination and reverse osmosis remains an option, but due to its high energy requirements it would be considered a last-resort solution.
3.3	Customer 3 raised concerns regarding repeated bursts on an asbestos water main in St Austell, the customer asked why this main is not being replaced given the number of bursts on the same stretch of road. Customer 3 also asked about the safety of asbestos water mains, given concerns about health issues linked to asbestos. Finally, the customer asked about water availability during drought when rivers are flowing right into the sea, how does the company manage resources to make sure they are diverted to keep water storage high. Response: • RS acknowledged the customers concerns and explained that the Drinking Water Inspectorate guidance confirms asbestos cement mains remain safe for supplying drinking water. • RS explained that the company logs every burst on it's GIS mapping system alongside the water quality performance in the network, the mains replacement programmes are prioritised based on burst history, water quality performance and risk assessments. • RS explained that water abstraction is tightly regulated to protect river habitats and ecology so despite strong river flows we are unable to abstract into reservoirs and all water companies are required to maintain compensation flows and augment specific

	rivers where necessary to ensure that flows are compensated during the summer months. This is monitored through permits in collaboration with the Environment Agency. • RS explained that whilst during winter recharge was strong, summer months have seen very limited rainfall so to compensate this and protect the surrounding rivers hosepipe bans are introduced. The company is investing in storage which will support supply however this does take time to implement. Cheddar 2 & 3 are in planning phase and will provide an additional 8 billion litres of storage for the greater South West. • KH explained that hydrologists within the business use predictions and forecasts based on history to forecast in the long term and predict where triggers might be met for certain drought levels, at which point we are legally bound, with the environment agency to enact our drought plans. KH acknowledged the huge impact of implementing a hosepipe ban but explained that the company has a duty to conserve water where possible and plan for the future.
	ACTION: KH to review the specific St Austell water main and provide an update on its replacement priority and timescales.
3.4	Customer 4 raised a concern about how future population growth and development are reflected within water resource planning, when some areas are already in Hosepipe ban's and there is an increase in housing developments, especially in the Tiverton area. Response: • KH acknowledged that the Allers network in the Tiverton area has been under a lot of strain this summer and explained that the company is implementing strategic projects including new trunk mains and network connectivity projects to improve resilience • KH explained that future housing growth and demand forecasts are incorporated into long-term investment programmes, Strategic projects are included in the Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP). Water resources management plan South West Water
3.5	Customer 5 raised concerns regarding repeated bursts on a water main at Raymonds Hill and the absence of replacement plans despite multiple repairs over the last decade, sharing frustration that operatives fixing the bursts comment that the main is in desperate need of repair yet this has not been done. Response: • KH and RS apologised to the customer for the disruption and acknowledged the situation appeared unusual compared with network norms and agreed to review the particular location • The company is prioritising investment over the next 4 years and stress testing drivers for investment such as leakage, mains burst and water quality. • The asset will be reviewed as part of ongoing investment prioritisation processes as the AMP progresses.
	ACTION: KH to review the Raymonds Hill water main and confirm future replacement plans

	and investment priorities.
3.6	Customer 6 asked about the potential impact of the proposed data centre development near Great Torrington on water demand in the region, given understanding that data centres consume a huge amount of water. Response: • IL explained that the company first became aware of the proposal through public announcements. • IL explained that the company shares the concerns of customers and has held discussions with developers to understand water requirements. • Developers have confirmed air-cooling technology will be used rather than water-based cooling, so water demand is expected to be primarily domestic and firefighting related. Whilst the specifics have not yet be agreed IL confirmed that the company will continue monitoring the development and engage with future planning applications. • IL explained that as data centres are getting more prevalent the water sector is sharing best practice on how to respond to applications. IL explained that across Pennon Group's regions there is a likelihood that further applications for data centres will be made and the company has policies in place to ensure secure water prevision to customers, before data centres.
3.7	Customer 7 asked whether given most of the company's investment programme deadlines are not until 2030 and 2050, do these project completion dates adequately reflects future housing growth and development? Response: • IL explained that the company is a statutory undertaker for developments and has an obligation to support development growth. However water companies are not statutory consultees so do not have to be consulted. Having said that the team does respond to every application that may impact the companies network and last year responded to around 25,000 planning applications and then track this development to support strategic local planning. • IL explained that the company utilises granting conditions where the company asks for a condition to be included within the planning permission that restricts occupation of properties, this allows the water company to make the relevant investment to deliver and binds the company to deliver infrastructure improvements • Overall the company works closely with local authorities on a weekly basis to ensure infrastructure investment requirements are identified and incorporated into long-term plans such as Water Resources Management Plan and the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan.
3.8	The Chair asked a question anonymously on behalf of a customer, there has been a lot of attention in the past on desalination has there been any measurable progress made on this or have these plans been dropped? Response

	• KH confirmed he is reviewing desalination as a solution and the proposal in North Devon • KH confirmed he would take this away as an action and provide an update to all attendees at the meeting and customers.
	ACTION: KH to provide attendees with an update on the current status and future role of desalination within long-term water resource planning.
4.	<u>Customer Overview and Q&A</u>
4.1	IC provided an overview of customer services and affordability support. Key points included: • Commitment to improving customer trust and service performance. • Investment in customer systems and processes. • Focus on vulnerable customers and affordability. Including auto enrolling customers onto support packages. • Emphasis on getting issues resolved correctly the first time. • Development of stronger incident management and customer communication processes.
4.2	The Chair raised a concern on Customer 8's behalf regarding shared metered supplies and fairness of charging arrangements where there is no option to be metered. Response: • IC explained the company is committed to reviewing individual shared supply situations. • IC explained assessed charges may be available where metering is not possible and encouraged customers to get in contact to explore these options • IC acknowledged that fairness and equity in charging is a complex issue and noted that South West Water bills remain among the higher bills in the industry. This is influenced by the additional costs associated with providing both water and wastewater services, maintaining 1/3 of the UK's designated bathing waters, and meeting increasing operational and treatment costs. • Charges are currently determined through a combination of metered usage and assessed charges where meters cannot be installed. • IC explained that the company is undertaking progressive tariff trials to explore alternative charging structures and improve affordability. • The trials are assessing customer consumption patterns and testing tariffs that encourage lower water use during peak periods and at times of highest demand. • Seasonal and usage-based tariff options are being explored to help smooth demand across the network. • Early findings indicate that these tariffs can make bills more manageable and affordable for customers while encouraging water efficiency.

	The company advised that the future combination of smart metering and progressive tariffs could provide customers with greater control over usage and costs, although further work is required before any long-term charging model is adopted.
	ACTION: IC to follow up directly with Customer 8 regarding her shared meter arrangement and available support options.
4.3	Customer 7 asked whether holiday parks pay additional charges due to increased seasonal water demand. Response: • Business customers are served through the non-household retail market rather than South West Water themselves • Alternative tariff approaches are being explored through industry trials which are regulated by MOSL • An increase in smart metering for business customers is expected to enable more tailored business charging in future and whilst the industry is not quite there yet this will open up a huge opportunity to target high business users. Customer 7 explained that he had a four-bedroom property and pays about £2,200 on water rates and doesn't feel safe enough to move onto a water meter despite the fact that he uses a number of water saving initiatives which reduce his water consumption. The customer explained that in his job he sees lots of customers switch to a meter and then being charged higher rates. Customer 7 asked if there is a temporary meter we can attach onto your pipe to assess rates before you switch. Response: • IC explained that generally customers are better off with a meter, especially when they use water wisely or use water butts. • The company offers lowest bill guarantee, so if you pay more on a meter we will refund you the difference annually. Customers also have two years to decide if it's for you and you can switch back at any time during these years. Water meters South West Water • IC suggested that in the first instance we conduct a water efficiency visit with the customer and then assess whether a meter could reduce his bills
	ACTION: IC to arrange for a Water Efficiency Visit for customer 7.
4.4	The Chair asked a question on behalf of Customer 9 what support is available for vulnerable customers, single claimants and customers with disabilities, and how customers can access help with their water bills. Response: - IC acknowledged that bills have gone up considerably in the last few years and recognise that this really challenging for customers - IC outlined a range of affordability schemes, including WaterCare, WaterSure, Fresh Start, Restart and Water Direct. - WaterCare can provide bill reductions for eligible low-income customers and may

	reduce your bill from will help you reduce your bill by anywhere between 15% and 85%. WaterSure caps charges for qualifying customers, including some larger families and customers with medical needs. - IC explained that support is also available for customers experiencing financial hardship, debt, bereavement or unemployment and all this support falls under our £200m support package from 2025-2030 - IC highlighted that the Priority Services Register provides additional support for vulnerable customers, including those with disabilities, health conditions or age-related needs. - Customers can access support online, by telephone, email or post, and affordability teams are available to provide advice and assess eligibility for assistance. - IC encouraged customers experiencing financial difficulties or know someone who requires additional support to contact the company for assistance Financial support South West Water - MT provided further context that Pennon Group were the first company to make the commitment to tackle water poverty and eliminate it (by the industry standard). South West Water achieved this in 2025 and the water regulatory then rolled this commitment out nationally. The company have committed to achieving this again by 2030.
4.5	Customer 10 reported contacting South West Water, the day before the meeting, after experiencing an internal burst water main and not knowing the location of the outside stop tap. She reported that there were 11 people in the queue on the emergency number and when the call was finally answered the call cut off. She had not managed to get in contact with the company for support since the burst. Response: • IC apologised on behalf of the company for the customer's experience acknowledging that this experience is extremely frustrating • IC explained that high call volumes due to hosepipe bans and operational incidents had affected waiting times. • IC agreed that calls should not disconnect when reaching the front of a queue and confirmed that the telephony system would be reviewed and tested. IC explained that the company is investing in new telephony and this will give the company the ability to leave a customer a message if the call cuts short with an option to call them back when they are first in the queue. • IC provided the emergency phone number 03443462020 to all customers on the call • IC committed to contacting Customer 10 directly to resolve her issue and once again apologised for her experience.
	ACTION: IC to contact customer 9 directly to provide support for her issue and review emergency line operability.
4.6	The Chair asked a question on behalf of Customer 1, is there a 24-7 online reporting

	mechanism for the public to report a water leak? Response IC confirmed that there is a reporting tool on the company's website. Leaks Report a problem South West Water
4.7	Customer 11 asked why she was phoned at 4am with hosepipe ban announcement as this was unacceptable. Response - IC apologised to all affected customers acknowledging that the calls being received at 4am were completely unacceptable. - IC explained that the messages had been scheduled to be issued earlier the previous evening and should not have been delivered overnight. - An investigation is being carried out with the third-party supplier responsible for distributing the messages to understand why the calls were delayed and delivered at 4am.
5	<u>Wastewater Overview and Q&A</u>
5.1	The Chair thanked customers from the Bristol and Bournemouth regions for attending and explained that the next section of the meeting would focus on wastewater services. As wastewater services are provided only by South West Water, customers from Bristol and Bournemouth were advised that they were welcome to leave the meeting at this point or remain if they wished to listen to the discussion.
5.2	RP provided an overview of wastewater performance. Highlights included: - Storm overflow spills reduced by 17% year-on-year. - Pollution incidents reduced by over 50% on a normalised basis. - High-spilling sites reduced by 50%. 100% bathing water compliance maintained for the 5th consecutive year on a like-for-like basis. £760 million investment allocated to storm overflow improvements.
5.3	Customer 4 raised concerns about Tiverton Wastewater Treatment Works, asked if the site is routinely running at near capacity and what resilience do we have in the system for all the new builds if it is already running at capacity. The customer also raised that the smell from the site travels all the way into Tiverton and asked how the company are managing this. Response: - RP confirmed significant volume of sludge from across the region is treated at Tiverton. - South West Water is planning to develop advanced anaerobic digestion facilities in Devon and Cornwall, in the next 5 years, to increase resilience and reduce pressure on existing sludge treatment centres, such as Tiverton - RP explained that future capacity requirements are assessed through its Drainage

	and Wastewater Management Plan, which considers housing growth and long-term demand. - RP explained investment is already underway at Little Silver Pumping Station, West Exe Pumping station to reduce overflows at these sites, and also upgrading the treatment works.
	ACTION: RP to investigate odour concerns associated with the Tiverton area and liaise with project teams to understand what investment is being made.
5.4	Customer 12 raised concerns regarding water quality in the River Chawleigh, following worrying reports of children becoming ill. The customer asked about spill frequency and how South West Water identifies whether contamination originates from human or agricultural sources. Response: • RP explained that its storm overflow improvement programme is currently focused on coastal assets, where approximately 70% of the company's wastewater assets are located, before expanding inland • The company confirmed that investment programmes are planned for both coastal and inland overflows, with improvements scheduled through to 2040. • Improvements are starting at the coast as this is where 80% of customers live and using stakeholder and customer insights have agreed that this is the best plan for the region. So the £760m and 291 overflows investments are focused on the coast. • RP explained that all reports of illness are investigated alongside the Environment Agency (EA) to determine potential causes and in this instance the EA investigation found no link to South West Water assets • RP explained that rivers are monitored through RNAGS (Reasons for Not Achieving Good Status), which considers all sources of contamination, including wastewater, agriculture, highway runoff and industrial activity. The water industry contributes to c. 12% of the RNAGS with agriculture contributing to 45%. • RP explained that continuous water quality monitoring is being expanded, including monitoring upstream and downstream of company assets and this work is being done in collaboration with DEFRA and the Environment Agency. • RP explained that the company can undertake contaminant source testing to identify whether pollution originates from human or animal sources and carries out more detailed investigations where concerns are identified. • Research is also being undertaken through the Centre for Resilience in Environment, Water and Waste (CREWW) to develop new monitoring and sampling techniques
5.5	Customer 11 questioned why spills were occurring during periods of very low rainfall and asked is it decades of underinvestment that has means the sewerage network cannot cope even in dry conditions? Response:

	• RP explained the definition of dry weather spills and the validation process for Event Duration Monitor (EDM) data. • RP explained that technology such as 12,000 sewer level monitors are used to monitor the network, using AI to learn the flows when they spot something unusual they send the alarm out and the company is able to intervene • There are some times at which data is not validated, so technicians visit to the site and check what was causing the spill to show on our WaterFit Live system. Technicians are on hand 24/7 to attend to pollutions where monitors pick up unusual activity • Potential causes include: natural blockages such as twigs or cobwebs that might be identified incorrectly, a blockage in the network which caused the spill, a developer site connected to our pumping station and overloading the system. In this situation the company works with the developer to reduce the pumping rate and investigate the issue. • RP highlighted that over 75% of all blockages on the network are caused by wet wipes, stating that the company are grateful for the government ban of these. • Overall, there are a number of reasons for a dry day spill and RP confirmed he would review any specific data sets so we could provide specific detail on why dry day spills were occurring
	ACTION: Contact customer 11 with the offer of reviewing specific data sets and providing detailed explanation on dry weather spills.
5.6	Customer 13 raised concerns regarding overflows into Mylor Creek, noting that the community is at the bottom of the catchment and experiences frequent overflows in the local creek which is right next to the recreational ground and an area where kids play and the community no longer uses the river. The customer explained that they are concerned that impact local water quality, seagrass habitats and shellfish waters as well as on the community. The customer also highlighted that the Event Duration Monitor (EDM) at Lemon Arms Pumping Station had been out of service since June 22nd and asked when it would be restored. The customer also suggested greater use of nature-based solutions to help communities like Mylor Creek, including rain gardens, swales and water butts, but noted that some elderly residents would require practical support to install them. Response: • RP committed to investigating the EDM outage at Lemon Arms Pumping Station Overflow (SBB00823) and providing an update on the cause and restoration timescales. • RP explained that EDMs are critical monitoring tools and that South West Water currently achieves over 98% operability across its monitoring network. • RP noted that monitor outages can be caused by power supply issues, connectivity problems or the challenging environments in which the equipment operates.

	• RP highlighted ongoing investment in Falmouth, including the construction of a large stormwater storage tank to help reduce overflows in the wider area. • RP explained that the company takes a green first approach when developing solutions to ensure the most cost effective and environmentally beneficial solution is agreed. RP highlighted the work on Dartmoor to restore peatland's and ensure water is maintained at the top of the catchment. Nature-based solutions South West Water • RP highlighted the importance of public awareness campaigns, including "Bin it don't block it" to support reduction in overflows and blockages at the bottom of the catchment. • RP highlighted the company engages with local community groups, including Friends of Mylor Creek, to identify opportunities to slow the flow of surface water entering the sewer network.
	ACTION: RP to investigate the EDM outage at Lemon Arms Pumping Station Overflow (SBB00823) and provide an update on restoration timescales to customer 13.
	ACTION: Company to continue engagement with local community groups to explore opportunities for nature-based drainage solutions in the Mylor Creek catchment
5.7	Customer 7 suggested incentivising public visits to wastewater treatment works to improve understanding of sewer misuse, sharing their personal experience that customers are not aware of the impact of what is put down the sink. Response: • RP thanked customer 7 for his idea and agreed that education on our network and processes is essential. RP noted the value of pester power and explained how the company's education programme targets primary school age children across the regions. • RP explained site visits already take place for community groups and schools and agreed the company would look into what more we can do to increase public visits to our treatment works and improve public understanding.
	ACTION: Company to consider opportunities to encourage customers to visit treatment works to improve public understanding.
6.	<u>Close</u>
6.1	The Chair thanked attendees, WaterShare+ panel members and company representatives for their participation and invited KH to provide some closing comments.
6.2	Keith Haslett acknowledged customer concerns and reiterated his personal and the wider organisational commitment to delivering for customers: • Improving performance across water, wastewater and retail services. • Delivering the £3.2 billion investment programme. • Enhancing customer service and environmental outcomes. • Ensuring customer insight more effectively informs decision-making.

Actions

1	KH to provide attendees with an update on the current status and future role of desalination within long-term water resource planning.
2	KH to review the specific St Austell water main and provide an update on its replacement priority and timescales and follow up with customer 3
3	KH to review the Raymonds Hill water main and confirm future replacement plans and investment priorities and follow up with customer 5
4	IC to follow up directly with customer 8 regarding her shared meter arrangement and available support options.
5	IC to arrange for a Water Efficiency Visit for customer 7.
6	IC to contact customer 9 directly to provide support for her issue and review emergency line operability.
7	RP to investigate odour concerns associated with the Tiverton area and liaise with project teams to understand what investment is being made.
8	RP to contact customer 11 with the offer of reviewing specific data sets and providing detailed explanation on dry weather spills.
9	RP to investigate the EDM outage at Lemon Arms Pumping Station Overflow (SBB00823) and provide an update on restoration timescales to customer 13.
10	Company to continue engagement with local community groups to explore opportunities for nature-based drainage solutions in the Mylor Creek catchment
11	Company to consider opportunities to encourage customers to visit treatment works to improve public understanding.