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**Lord Matthew Taylor**Chair of the WaterShare+
Advisory Panel

A stake and a say in our business

# Chair's Introduction

I am pleased to introduce this report which covers the work of the Watershare+ Advisory Panel from October 2020 to the end of October 2021.

These have been difficult years with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic felt by both the customers and employees of South West Water and Bournemouth Water.

Introducing the new Watershare+ customer scheme and creating the customer focussed advisory panel during this time has also presented its own challenges, but I believe we have achieved what we set out to do in our inaugural year.

We have met as a panel over 20 times – mainly virtually. As you will see from this report we have met in public (again virtually) three times so far and we have developed our own challenge log that will enable us to better monitor the company's performance against their business plan.

By holding in depth sessions with the executive directors we have been able to drill into the operational issues that face a £1bn water company. We have also worked with the water industry regulators to learn more about their priorities and how they impact both the company and its customers. By inviting the Consumer Council for Water, Environment Agency and Natural England to directly advise and attend the Panel, we have been able to understand their concerns too, and get their perspective on the evidence presented to us by the company on their successes and challenges over the year.

Overall, this has enabled the Panel to genuinely hold the company to account on behalf of customers and ensure the customer view is heard.

One of the most pressing challenges facing the water sector and South West Water is the number of serious pollution incidents and the actions needed to reduce the incidents and the impact on the environment. This has been elected in the priority given to this in customer representations to the Panel. The Panel have examined this issue in depth and sought information and answers from both the company and the water industry regulators. We have also enabled customers to attend our public meetings and question the company's CEO and other senior executives directly, and several raised their specific concerns in this area. It will continue to be a key area of focus. Our challenge log gives an overview on what we have asked and what is being done, and it clearly remains work in progress. We welcome the company's renewed emphasis on tackling this issue.

#### Chair's Introduction continued

Pollutions are not however the only challenge. COVID-19 has created challenges for both the company in delivering its services, and for many customers who have been hit financially. Climate change is increasing extreme weather events, impacting water resources and the capacity and serviceability of the network. We have also examined the company's response to these challenges and welcome the fact services have continued to be delivered and enhanced despite COVID-19 restrictions, support extended to assist customers, and progress made on improving resilience to meet climate impacts.

In the end, doing the right thing is about customers, their needs and expectations. For the next year we will begin a further programme of customer engagement to give us continuing confidence that both the company and the Panel have clear and up to date insight into evolving customer priorities and concerns.

WaterShare+ is an exciting and innovative programme that offers customers a greater say in what South West Water and Bournemouth Water does, as well as offering a financial benefit to customers. The Panel will continue to work with the Board of the company and customers as we develop as a panel and help to ensure that WaterShare+ achieves its full potential.

### **Lord Matthew Taylor**

Roche Cornwall





### **Chief Executive** Officer's Review



#### **Our values**



#### **Trusted**

We do the right thing for our customers and stakeholders



### Responsible

We keep our promises to our customers, communities and each other



### **Collaborative**

We forge strong relationships, working together to make a positive impact



### **Progressive**

We are always looking for new ways to improve and make life better

### **Bringing water to life** – Supporting the lives of people and places they love for generations to come.

I believe there's no better way to respond to or capture public sentiment than building a deeper relationship with customers - really engaging with them and putting them at the heart of our decision-making.

That's why, as part of our New Deal Business Plan, we launched our innovative and pioneering WaterShare+ scheme, sharing £20 million of outperformance with customers, and giving them not only a say in what we do, but a stake too.

Shaped by customers for customers, its origins were in the largest ever customer consultation we have ever undertaken. One in 16 households in our region are now shareholders as well as customers, heralding a new era in customer ownership - a true partnership.

Sharing our success with customers is at the heart of WaterShare+ and put simply, if we deliver, customers also benefit.

Our new independent WaterShare+ Advisory Panel provides a strong platform to empower customers. This is just the start of real and honest customer engagement, with a richer and deeper relationship with customers.

We're also tapping into the social consciousness of our customers in new ways having just launched South West Water and Bournemouth Water's industry first Water-Saving Community Fund, empowering customers to champion and drive initiatives to save water locally, whether that's using rainwater to flush a public toilet, or water butts in community allotments.

Our new Neighbourhood Fund is also supporting communities with well needed help and support to build back better post the pandemic as well as encouraging employees to give an hour to support communities and causes close to their heart.

I would like to thank the Panel for their leadership in representing the views of customers to ensure we focus on the things that matter most.

### **Susan Davy**

Chief Executive Officer



### **About the WaterShare+ Advisory Panel**

### Who are we?

The WaterShare+ Advisory Panel is an independent group of customer. business and social representatives.

The membership of the Panel is strengthened with expert advisors from the Consumer Council for Water, Environment Agency and Natural England. All provide specialist insight and challenge to the company on behalf of the Panel and customers.

### **WaterShare+ Advisory Panel**

Lord Matthew Taylor - Chair

Nick Buckland OBE - Vice Chair

**Adrian Bratt** 

**Carole Theobald** 

Mark Duddridge

**Richard Lacey** 

### **WaterShare+ Expert Advisors**

Michael Barnes - CCW

Kevin Ward - Environment Agency

Fergus Mitchell - Natural England

Appendix 1 WaterShare+ Advisory Panel biographies.







It's fantastic to be involved in something that is ground-breaking coming from the South West. WaterShare+ to me is a tangible demonstration of South West Water's real want to succeed.



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WaterShare+ gives customers the opportunity to engage with the company and see how the company is run, it's a positive and transparent move.



**Nick Buckland** 

99

South West Water has a really important part to play in terms of supporting the population. Certainly, post Covid, we are all going to feel the pinch so South West Water delivering its plans is going to help in quite a



**Mark Duddridge** 

**Adrian Bratt** 

The Panel is here to look after the customers interest and challenge the company on its performance.



**Richard Lacey** 

An advisory panel of this type is a new concept and provides an additional dimension and purpose to engagement and involvement by putting the interest of customers at the heart of South West Water's New Deal.



**Carole Theobald** 



PR19 Business Plan 2020-2025

### What we do

The purpose of the WaterShare+ Advisory Panel is:

- To boost customer engagement and feedback to help inform the Panel's assessment and response on the company's performance
- To champion the interests and needs of customers by providing an independent view on the delivery of the company's business plan, including its performance commitments and board pledges
- To increase awareness of the WaterShare+ customer scheme of share ownership and a greater say in how the business is run.

The Panel's terms of reference were approved by the company in October 2020. The Panel works through a regular programme of meetings and engagement with the company, expert advisers and customers throughout the year.

### Specific elements of what we do include:

- 1. Seeking customer feedback by holding quarterly meetings in public and further customer research
- 2. Monitor and review progress on the company's performance outcomes
- **3.** Review the company's approach to sharing customer benefit, including the timing of sharing any net gain and that it has been accurately assessed
- **4.** Share views on behalf of customers on the company's dividend policy and any proposed changes
- **5.** Provide an annual performance report statement and overview of the Panel's activities and assessment of the company's performance.

A description of the role of the Panel together with its membership, terms of reference and the minutes of its meetings can be found on the company's website www.southwestwater.co.uk



### **Have your say**

You can tell us what you think and have your say by asking us a question at

www.southwestwater.co.uk/about-us/watershareplus/meeting/

or www.bournemouthwater.co.uk/about-us/watershareplus/watershare-public-meeting/



## **Engagement**and activities

One purpose of the WaterShare+ Advisory Panel is to boost engagement and feedback to help inform the Panel's assessment and response to the company's performance.

In the last year, our work has principally focused on the following areas:

- We established the Panel and its remit, devising a schedule of formal panel
  and company meetings as well as a series of public meetings, so we are able to
  ensure that progress of the business plan and pledges reflect the expectations
  of customers
- We have held individual meetings with the executive team of South West
   Water and Bournemouth Water on a series of thematic topics to understand its operations, challenges and strategies in detail
- We have held in-depth briefings with our expert advisors from the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Consumer Council for Water to understand their views of the company's performance, and explore with them issues raised and faced by customers on the company's performance
- We have responded to the views and proposals from the national water sector, including Ofwat (the water regulator) and the Consumer Council for Water, to ensure that future decisions are in the best interests of South West Water and Bournemouth Water customers.

In particular, in 2020 Ofwat published its discussion paper 'Ofwat PR24 and beyond: Reflecting customers preferences in future price reviews'. It set out its proposed goal for customer engagement at future price reviews and the use of national as well as local research to inform the companies future plans. As part of our activities the Panel reviewed these proposals and discussed this with South West Water before it independently responded to Ofwat. A summary of the Panel's response can be seen in Key Focus Areas of this report. We have similarly engaged with the Consumer Council for Water in respect to its emerging views on how customers are best engaged by the Water Companies and in Ofwat's determinations of future business plans.



### **Meetings**

### **Chief Executive Officer**

Meeting type	Meeting date	Topics discussed
Panel	2 October 2020	<ul><li>Terms of Reference</li><li>The role of the Panel</li><li>The role of South West Water</li><li>Dates of future meetings.</li></ul>
	6 January 2021	<ul><li>South West Water's Business Plan</li><li>Performance update.</li></ul>
	8 March 2021	<ul> <li>Performance update</li> <li>Board pledge – outstanding customer service</li> <li>Board pledge – supporting customers, affordability.</li> </ul>
	23 June 2021	<ul> <li>Approval of minutes</li> <li>Environmental leadership</li> <li>Environment Agency views on performance</li> <li>Performance</li> <li>Full year results performance update</li> <li>Government contribution</li> <li>Board leadership and transparency.</li> </ul>
Public	12 January 2021	<ul> <li>Introduction to the Panel and it's role</li> <li>Overview of South West Water's New Deal Business Plan</li> <li>Half year performance update</li> <li>Customer open session.</li> </ul>
	26 April 2021	<ul> <li>Approval of minutes</li> <li>Overview of services in North Devon</li> <li>Customer open session</li> <li>Overview of affordability in the region.</li> </ul>
	7 July 2021	<ul> <li>Approval of minutes</li> <li>Customer engagement</li> <li>Environmental focus <ul> <li>performance</li> </ul> </li> <li>Environmental focus – our plans</li> <li>Expert advisor views <ul> <li>on performance</li> <li>Customer open session.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### **Thematic topics and briefings**

Meeting type	Meeting date	Topics discussed
Executive meeting	8 March 2021	Drinking water
	15 April 2021	Engineering
	26 April 2021	Wastewater
	19 May 2021	Customer service
	24 May 2021	Regulatory
	27 May 2021	Finance
CEO meeting	4 Aug 2021	Panel
Expert advisor meeting	11 March 2021	Environment Agency
g	28 May 2021	CCW
	23 June 2021	Natural England

### **Challenges**

The WaterShare+ Advisory Panel has used meetings of the Panel, both in public and directly with the company's senior executives and CEO, to ask questions and information of the company on the delivery of the business plan, customer research, and specific issues arising from customer concerns such as the response to COVID-19 and pollution incidents. The Panel consider these challenges a vital dialogue to achieve best outcomes and welcome the company's positive and constructive engagement.

The company's responses to the challenges and questions asked have been considered by the Panel. This year is the first in this five-year period and therefore much is still to be delivered. Therefore, the Panel primarily focused this year on seeking clarification on how the company plans to deliver on its performance commitments and areas where this may be falling behind, plus more immediate issues that have arisen such as the response to COVID-19.

Whilst much is on track, one principal area of concern has been the company's wastewater pollution performance. Given that this area remains one of the customer's top three priorities, and an area the Environment Agency and Ofwat have flagged as an area of concern as have customers, the Panel have consistently and robustly challenged the company about its pollution incidents and how the commitment to significantly reduce pollutions is being and will be delivered. Whilst we welcome the clear commitment to improve in this area and note the recent performance does show a more encouraging trend, it will remain an area of focus as we continue to hold the company to account.

Summary of key questions and challenges from the Panel and customers can be seen in Appendix  $2\dots$ 

Significantly these questions and challenges have resulted in the Panel:

- Asking Government to continue the £50 contribution for South West Water customers for next year and the remainder of the current parliamentary period
- Supporting the company's Green Recovery plans
- Challenging the progress on wastewater pollutions performance
- Commissioning future research on customer priorities for combined sewer overflows to help understand customer views on future plans and investment
- Requesting Ofwat to address concerns on how regional priorities will be assessed and incorporated into future business planning
- Confirming the company's dividend and Executive remuneration approach was transparent
- Being satisfied the company's provided assurance is robust.

"As climate change is making the planet hotter is there a need for our region to have another reservoir to store drinking water?"

Public Meeting July 2021

"We are really pleased to have this opportunity to speak directly to South West Water and the WaterShare+ Advisory Panel. Thank you for offering to visit us to see how you can help us further"

Public Meeting April 2021

# **Key Areas** of Focus

Through the Panel's engagement activities with the company the following principal areas have been scrutinised and challenged with the assistance of our expert advisors. Our key areas of focus are set out below.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

The Panel recognises that this has continued to have been a difficult year with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic felt by both the customers and employees of South West Water and Bournemouth Water.

Having always been aware of the essential service it provides, the company has made it clear that it's first priority has been to support employees during the pandemic so that whatever the circumstances it can keep water flowing 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

During the pandemic none of the company's employees were furloughed and all employees who were shielding, self-isolating or supporting family members remained on full pay. The company also extended its 24/7 employee assistance service to cover additional family members and introduced a new income protection scheme to support employees who are unable to work due to long-term illness. During the year the company also increased headcount to enhance service to customers during this time.

The company has advised that 83% of employees believed they have been supported and communicated with well throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the pandemic the company were one of the first to encourage customers who were shielding or in a vulnerable group or who had symptoms, to sign up for the company's Priority Services. By doing so, if there was a supply interruption and customers could not leave their home the company could arrange them water deliveries as a priority. 21,000 customers registered for this support.

The company also offered proactive help to customers who needed help with bills, adapting their affordability measures to individual circumstances including the automatic renewal of social tariffs with relaxed evidence requirements to recognise customers had been asked to stay at home. As a result of lockdown restrictions face to face affordability visits were moved online resulting in over 3,600 appointments being carried out in this way. In addition to direct help with water bills provided by the company, significant additional financial support was given to customers as a result of the South West Water's WaterCare+ programme which also helps customers make sure they are in receipt of all eligible benefits.

The Panel would like to commend the company for its efforts during this time.



### **PR19 Outcomes and Performance Commitments**

Within its business plan South West Water has a range of performance commitments which apply across its South West and Bournemouth areas. These performance commitments are based upon extensive research identifying key customer and other stakeholder priorities. On behalf of customers an important element of the Panel's role is to provide an independent view on the company's business plan, including its performance commitments and board pledges.

Throughout the year South West Water has shared regular updates on its 2020/21 performance, reporting a strong start to this regulatory period with c80% of its performance commitments on track or ahead of target.

South West Water has categorised these performance commitments as either areas of excellence, outperformance, on track or marginal underperformance or areas of focus, as illustrated in Appendix 2.

The company is targeting achieving all commitments by the end of the 2020-25 regulatory period and the Panel has scrutinised and challenged the company to ensure it is fully able to assess how the company is performing against this plan. This has included the company providing detailed reports which easily compare performance against its planned performance commitments.

Customers top priority is delivering a continued supply of clean drinking water, and there have been no water restrictions despite the higher demand during the year.

The company has also been able to report improving water quality, reduced customer supply interruption with reductions in sewer collapses, internal flooding incidents and wastewater compliance. However, the company missed their leakage target this year despite significant activity on their network. The company demonstrated to us it has a targeted plan in place to improve performance in this area and advised improvements have already been seen in 2021/22.

Wastewater pollution performance has been a weakness for the company. The Panel has robustly challenged the company's wastewater pollution performance holding a deep dive review to explore this area. South West Water have acknowledged that some of the activities targeted in their Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) haven't delivered the speed of improvements targeted and performance in 2020/21 was below the standards it demands of itself.

We have examined the activity and investment the company is undertaking to address this and taken advice from the Environment Agency and Natural England on their view. We conclude there is a real commitment from the company to step up their action to address pollutions, a commitment we will continue to focus on tracking in the coming year. Together with our expert advisors we have and will continue to scrutinise the company's Pollution Incident Reduction Plan including its analysis on route cause and timelines of improvement outcomes.

Through further customer research, our activities will also include testing customer views on performance and investment. Though we acknowledge and welcome recent improvements in wastewater pollutions performance we will continue to hold the company to account in this area.

### **Employee Engagement**

More than ever the panel understands at the heart of any great business are the people who work within it. As part of our assessment, we are keen to hear how the company is focusing in this area, particularly as the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to make this a challenging year.

The company's Chief Executive Officer has publicly stated that one of her first priorities has been to focus on making South West Water the best place to work and that South West Water's people strategy is centred around talented people doing great things for customers and each other, creating a great place to work.

The Panel have noted that the company:

- Were one of the first to sign up to participate in the Governments' Kickstart Scheme offering valuable work experience for up to 50 placements to 16-24 year olds across the region who were suffering from a lack of employment opportunity as a result of the pandemic
- Continue to embrace apprentices with a target to offer 500 over the next five years, with 67 recruited this year and 150 new apprenticeship starts planned for the next three months
- Launched a new Graduate Management Programme for 20 Graduates who will work with the company to bring their talents, share their enthusiasm, motivation and become our Managers of the future
- At 84% achieved its highest ever participation rate within the Great Places to Work Workplace Survey.

The Panel notes that the company has worked hard to ensure its employees have felt supported over a challenging year. The company has continued to develop and evolve the opportunities for employees to input their views to ensure employees are represented and have opportunities to understand and feed into discussions on matters that impact them and the work they do. The Panel were therefore pleased see that the company had been officially recognised as a Great Place Work with their Trust Index score increasing to 68% which is significantly above the national average of 53%. We will continue to take an active interest in the company's people strategy.

**50**Government Kickstart placements for

16-24 year olds

**67**apprentices recruited this year

20
new places for a new
Graduate Management
Programme

participation rate within the Great Places to Work Workplace survey





### **Supporting Customers - Affordability**

South West Water has pledged to deliver efficiency, keeping bills as low as possible and target zero customers in water poverty by 2025, defined as any household that pays more than 5% of disposable income on water and sewerage. In early 2021, the Panel reviewed the company's approach to supporting customers who are experiencing affordability challenges.

Through its research the company highlighted that customers see affordability as extremely important to address; but that customers also want services to keep improving whilst ensuring bills are affordable. This requires careful balancing so that vulnerable and low-income customers are protected whilst ensuring high levels of service continue.

The Panel noted that the company has a long track record of providing innovative solutions to address affordability with over 71,000 individual affordability schemes processed to date and the continuance of the company's WaterCare+ Scheme which provides holistic help to customers through benefit entitlement checks, energy efficiency advice and signposting and the application of the WaterCare+ tariff.

The company acknowledged the impacts of COVID-19 could make this stretching commitment more difficult but are flexing their approach and delivery to proactively offer affordability help to customers.

The company outlined a clear plan through the implementation of its Affordability Toolkit to achieve affordability for all. This includes metering, water efficiency advice and maximising incomes followed by the application of social tariffs which have been extended for 2021/22.

With customers highlighting affordability being extremely important to address, the Panel will continue to review progress in this area so it can be assured the company is delivering on its target to achieve zero customers in water poverty by 2025, the most ambitious target in the water sector.



### **Government contribution**

The government contribution is a £50 well-established and necessary on-going rebate correcting the historical unfairness where 3% of the population have contributed to fund 33% of the country's beaches. These beaches as we know, are some of the best in Europe, enjoyed by millions today and a major contributor to the region's tourist economy.

In April the Panel reviewed research into the impact and customer views on the importance of the Government Contribution for South West Water Customers and established that 76% of its removal would immediately move additional households into water poverty if the £50 rebate was taken away.

As an independent body, established to represent the interest of customers the Panel will advocate to Government to continue the £50 contribution next year and for the remainder of the current parliamentary period to ensure the Government's commitment to correct this historical unfairness is delivered for customers.

### **Customer engagement and research**

One of the key elements of the Panel's purpose is to boost customer engagement and feedback to help and inform the Panel's assessment and response to the company's performance, and thus to better inform the company on customer concerns.

The pandemic has limited our ability to invite customers to public meetings this year. We addressed this through initiating virtual public meetings, but we welcome the fact that we are now able to start holding customer meetings in person, beginning with the first WaterShare+ Customer Annual General Meeting in November. The Panel will use this as a platform to increase awareness of WaterShare+ and promote the role of the Panel to further increase engagement with customers.

The company has provided the Panel with ongoing research on customer views on those areas of performance reviewed during the year. This ensures the Panel can understand how customers feel about performance and helps inform how the Panel should be assessing the company. The Panel will in the coming year take a role in the commissioning of additional research from customers to strengthen the Panel's view and future assessments.

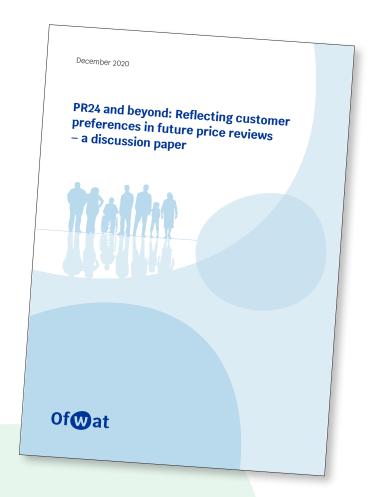
### Panel views to Ofwat's proposals for future customer engagement

In 2020 Ofwat published its discussion paper entitled 'Ofwat PR24 and beyond: Reflecting customers preferences in future prices reviews'. It set out proposed goals for customer engagement at future price reviews and the use of national as well as local research to inform companies future plans.

The Panel revived the proposals and responded to Ofwat highlighting that South West Water has taken a leading role in developing sector leading customer engagement and that as a regional company has customers with regional priorities reflecting local issues, geography, and concerns. The Panel also noted that previous Customer Challenge Groups (now the WaterShare+ Advisory Panel) have been a critical part of challenging and reviewing customer priorities and subsequent development of South West Water's sector leading business plan.

The panel has therefore responded to Ofwat with specific questions which we feel should be considered before proceeding. Our concerns centre around how regional priorities will be assessed and incorporated into business plan assessment, and how any national research will be verified. We pressed for a continued central role for customer panels like ours in the price review process, to verify plans, reflect local needs and priorities as seen by customers.

The panel and industry are now waiting for Ofwat's publication of its research methodology. This will be a key focus point for us in ensuring regional customer views are appropriately considered in the development of future plans for South West Water and Bournemouth Water.



### **Environmental Leadership**

The Panel, like customers, believe that taking the lead on environmental matters is a priority. The delivery of environmental leadership is one of South West Water's Board pledges and in July 2021 the company presented the Panel with an update on its performance in this area so that we were able to test the progress of the company's plan.

The company has continued to track customer priorities which highlight there is an increasing customer focus on environmental issues. The company uses customer research as the basis on which to build its plans and advised that environmental measures across its performance commitments, capital framework and Green Recovery proposals are all based on customer priorities.

Overall, the top three customer priorities have remained broadly the same:

- Clean, safe water supply
- Bathing waters
- Preventing pollution.

However, customers have told the company they now want a stronger focus on investments to protect the environment and water resources in the event of extreme weather (climate change). Given our work over the year and the evidence we have seen, the Panel concludes that South West Water understands it has a key role to play in protecting and enhancing the environment, that it is stepping up its actions to do so, and it has committed to invest £150 million in their largest environmental programme for 15 years.

With the south west having one third of all the designated bathing waters in England this makes environmental leadership in this area vital to the success of the regions tourist industry which is a major part of the economy of the region. The Panel were pleased to note that the company was outperforming its performance commitments on bathing water quality with four of the eight bathing water improvement measures due by 2025 already being delivered in 2020/21.

South West Water has also made a commitment to Net Zero Carbon by 2030. The company's strategy to Net Zero is structured around the three key pillars of sustainable living, championing renewables and reversing carbon emissions. The Panel welcomes the company's ambition in this aspect of environmental leadership and look forward to assessing progress over the coming period.

### TOP THREE CUSTOMER PRIORITIES

- Clean, safe water supply
- 2 Bathing waters
- 3 Preventing pollution.

### Key Areas of Focus continued



As part of the update the company presented a detailed environmentally focused performance overview, advising c87% of environmental measures were outperforming or on-track. As a Panel we noted areas of strong performance where the company was exceeding its performance commitments particularly in areas of biodiversity, internal sewer flooding, sewer blockages and collapses and bathing water quality.

However, the company also recognised that wastewater pollution incidents have not been at a level that meets customer expectations and are therefore a key area of focus which requires improvement. The panel reviewed in detail South West Water's pollutions reduction strategy which is focused on investments targeted to give the most benefit, and which reflects discussions with the Environment Agency. The company has published its plans on its website and the Panel welcomes further customer feedback on these. We will continue to monitor and interrogate their implementation and hold the company to account for their successful delivery.

As part of the assessment of the company's PR19 performance the previous South West Water customer Panel rigorously scrutinised South West Water's wastewater pollution performance and improvement strategy, and we will continue to hold the company to account in this area.

The Panel has also sought to understand the issues associated with storm overflows. We understand customers are always concerned about any storm overflow discharges. These overflows are designed to operate to prevent wastewater backing up into homes and streets at times of heavy rainfall that would overwhelm the sewer system which also receives rainwater run-off from roads and so on, or in other emergencies. Such overflows may not be a sign that the system is faulty and currently combined sewer overflows are a necessary part of the existing sewerage system, preventing sewerage flooding homes and businesses. However, such discharges should only occur when strictly necessary, and we welcome planned investment both to better alert the public about all such discharges, and investment to minimises the need for discharges and eliminate unnecessary ones caused for example by equipment failures.

That said, we also acknowledge that we all have a role to play in how we use our sewer systems, as problems can often be caused by inappropriate materials put into the sewerage systems, as well as other factors not in the company's control such as private drainage, highways drainage and rural run-off and riverine flooding. The Panel will commission further research to help lead meaningful conversations to understand customer interest and concerns even further in this area. Research will help to drive deeper understanding of customer priorities in specific areas like storm overflows and be used to help influence future plans and investments in addition to our assessment of company performance.

The delivery of the investments and other actions to achieve environmental leadership by South West Water will continue to be a key focus area for us and we expect to regularly review the company's progress.

### **Green Recovery**

The south west's economy has been one of the hardest hit by COVID-19 and the company has consulted with us on its Green Recovery initiative which will play a key role in supporting and enhancing the local economy.

The company's plans have been shaped by the views of customers and as we all face the immediate economic crisis of COVID-19, and the longer-term crisis of catastrophic climate change, South West Water's Green Recovery plans are the right thing at the right time.

Green Recovery plans provide much needed investment that will support the creation of up to 500 additional jobs over the next four years and provide further opportunities for South West Water's existing workforce to gain new green skills by increasing environmental investment focused on improving public health and protecting the environment and addressing climate change.

The Panel is all about ensuring South West Water delivers on these commitments to customers. These plans for further enhancing the environment, public health, creating new and better jobs are welcomed, especially as customers' bills won't be impacted.

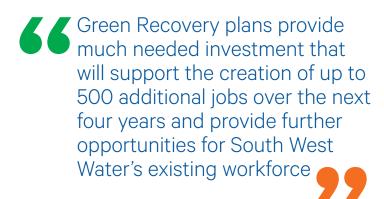
### **Reporting and assurance**

In July 2021 South West Water provided the Panel with a view from its external Technical Auditor (Jacobs) on its assurance of the technical elements of South West Water's Annual Performance Report (APR) for the year 2020/21.

The external Technical Auditor confirmed the scope of work covered all regulatory non-financial data published in the APR and was focused on South West Water's performance commitments. The report confirmed the approach and governance in place for checking and verifying information from accountable data providers, managers and Directors.

The external Technical Auditor confirmed it agreed of the company's assessment of performance for this year.

The Panel recognises the assurance provided as robust and transparent. To strengthen the capability of the Panel to challenge company performance on behalf of customers we have asked the company to invite the external Technical Auditor to present findings to the panel directly in future years.



### WaterShare+ Advisory Panel - Annual Performance View

WaterShare+ is an exciting and pioneering scheme that offers customers a greater say and stake in what South West Water does.

The Panel have been tasked with ensuring the company is held to account for its performance in an open and transparent manner. A key role of the Panel is to scrutinise and challenge on behalf of customers the company's performance against its New Deal business plan, including its performance commitments and Board Pledges to ensure that the company delivers on the promises it has made to customers.

Through our work and public meetings both the Panel and customers have been able to question the company's executive team directly about areas which concern them, giving customers a different level of engagement and a genuine voice.

Whilst COVID-19 restrictions have meant that we have not been able to meet in public during the year we have held virtual sessions which customers have had the opportunity to attend and raise the questions that are important to them.

South West Water has provided reports, information and assurance associated with its annual performance. The company's external technical assurance provider has also confirmed that performance information published in the company's annual performance report is accurate, reliable and complete and that the company is making progress against its performance commitments confirmed by Ofwat. As a result, the Panel is satisfied that the company's performance data is accurate and robust.

Through the year it has been clear there is rising customer concern about the relative weakness of South West Water's pollution performance. The company's wastewater pollution performance has been consistently and robustly challenged by the Panel and by customers attending our meetings in public. We note recent performance does show a more encouraging trend, and though we will continue to hold the company to account in this area we welcome the company's continued focus on its ambition to become a top performing company in this area and its plans to achieve this.

The Panel is also pleased to recognise the company's working relationship with the Panel has been in our judgement open, transparent, and productive. The Panel welcomes the efforts the company are making in helping us maintain and strengthen our ability to independently scrutinise and challenge their performance, to be robustly informed and able to cross question the CEO and other senior executives and so to meet the panel's objectives and expectations during the year to hold them to account on behalf of customers

The Panel looks forward to continuing to provide independent challenge to the company, and assurance to the South West Water Board to help steer the direction of the company in meeting the promises it has made to customers.

...the Panel is satisfied that the company's performance data is accurate and robust.



### **Priorities for 2021/22**

### **Priorities for the coming year**

- 1 Wastewater pollutions reductions
- 2 Increasing our own customer engagement and research
- 3 Performance Commitments
- 4 Green Recovery initiatives
- 5 Board Pledges.

### **Important dates**

10 November 2021 **Customer Annual General Meeting** and Company Meeting

20 December 2021 **Public Meeting** 

31 January 2022 **Company Meeting** 

10 March 2022 **Public Meeting** 





### Have your say

You can tell us what you think and have your say by asking us a question at

www.southwestwater.co.uk/about-us/ watershareplus/meeting/

or www.bournemouthwater.co.uk/about-us/ watershareplus/watershare-public-meeting/

### Appendix 1.

### **Your WaterShare+ Advisory Panel**



**Lord Matthew Taylor** Chair

Lord Matthew Taylor was Member of Parliament for Truro and St.Austell form 1987 until he stood down in 2010. He is an acknowledged expert in sustainable development, advising successive Governments of all types on improving national planning and housing policy. Alongside advising Government, Matthew runs his own consultancy business as a strategic advisor on achieving more sustainable outcomes on a significant number of major sustainable new 'garden community' projects across the UK.

Following a decade of working in the water sector as a Non-Executive Director at South West Water, focused on improving customer and environmental outcomes, Matthew continues to champion these interests by holding the company to account as the independent WaterShare+ Chair.



**Mark Duddridge** 

Mark is currently the Chair at Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP and an associate Non-Executive Director of the Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. He has held several senior leadership roles in regional businesses, such as Samworth Brothers, Ginsters and Roddas.



**Adrian Bratt** 

Adrian is a commercial lawyer and qualified governance professional. He joined Princess Yachts in 2017 to provide legal, compliance and governance advice across the business operations within the UK and internationally. Prior to this he worked at a large national private practice law firm for 10 years where he acted predominantly in the manufacturing, retail, and energy sectors for major national and multinational PLCs.



**Nick Buckland OBE** Deputy Chair

Nick continues to champion the needs of customers having successively chaired the previous independent WaterShare and WaterFuture panels, overseeing and challenging delivery and development of South West Water's business plans.

Nick brings a wealth of experience to the role, he is an experienced and highly regarded leader, chair, and board member.



**Carole Theobald** 

Carole has worked in the public and charitable sectors in Cornwall for more than 16 years. In 2016, she joined iSightCornwall, a leading sight loss charity supporting more than 4,000 people each year, where she now serves as Chief Executive.

Carole is a highly versatile senior leader with a wealth of experience in customer advocacy.



**Richard Lacey** 

For the last five years, Richard has chaired the Bournemouth Water Customer View Group ensuring that the company delivers against its promises, he was instrumental in ensuring services to Bournemouth Water customers were not impacted when South West Water acquired the company in 2016. Richard continues to ensure that Bournemouth Water's customer needs are considered on the WaterShare+ Advisory Panel.

Richard is a Chartered Civil Engineer with a lifetime's experience in the Water Supply Industry both in the UK and overseas, where he has held both Executive and Non-Executive Directorships in water companies.

# Appendix 2. **Challenge Summary**

Area	Question/Challenge	Company response	Panel actions
Employee Engagement continued		As all responsible and trusted businesses, we have a duty to make a positive societal contribution - whether that is promoting social mobility, addressing racial and gender equality or in providing secure and meaningful employment where all employees are paid fairly for the work they do. We are focusing on all these things through listening and acting on employee views through our Employee Forums and promoting diversity and equal opportunities.	
		This year we asked employees how it feels to work for South West Water using Great Places to Work Best Workplace Survey. We achieved the highest ever participation rate and have officially passed the threshold to become accredited as a Great Place to Work.	
customers – affordability  proactively helping customers?  efficiently as possible to keep bills low for all of customers. We also understand and recognise that some customers may not find their bill affordable so we have developed an industry leading toolkit of support for customers with affordability or debt issues.  For some of our customers affordability of the water bills is not likely to be an isolated concerned and can often be an indicator of broader issue. We know that through our affordability toolkit we can have a broader impact, which is why could toolkit of measures goes beyond just providing help with water bills. We proactively support customers to identify and claim additional income, improving the whole of the household financial situation with associated social and economic benefits.  The impact of these activities should not be understated. Each benefit check we do identify on average an additional £67 per week to the	proactively	affordable so we have developed an industry leading toolkit of support for customers with	The Panel noted the company's commitment to helping customers through the use of its Affordability Toolkit.  The Panel will continue to review progress in this area
	customers to identify and claim additional income, improving the whole of the household financial situation with associated social and	so it can be assured the company is delivering on its target to achieve zero customers in water poverty by 2025, the most ambitious target in the water sector	
		understated. Each benefit check we do identifies on average an additional £67 per week to the household and over 30,000 customers currently	

Area	Question/Challenge	Company response	Panel actions
Supporting customers – affordability continued		Our Freshstart fund helps customers who are new to debt and who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances, through bereavement, long-term illness or loss of a job. In 2020/21 £185k of financial support was provided to customers, bringing the total amount to over £1.65m since it was introduced.	
		COVID-19 has also had a significant economic impact on our customers. Through the pandemic we have reviewed and adapted the support we offer to customers who are experiencing affordability issues and will continue to do so as the economic effects of the pandemic continues. Some of the steps we have taken include:	
		Proactively contacting over 333,000 customers by email to provide reassurance that their safety and support was our top priority	
		Our support measures were promoted online and via social media, with an online form introduced on our website for customers to register any affordability issues arising from COVID-19. To date 6,300 customers have used this service	
		To make the application for support easier for customers who had to shield, or who were unable to complete a form of one of our tariffs, we adapted our WaterCare home visits service to provide support over the telephone	
		We have automatically renewed customers on social tariffs and offered higher discounts to those customers who need it the most	
		Offered payment support and converted cash payers to other methods.	
		Looking ahead we are continuing to expand the support we provide to help customers who struggle to pay their bills. From 1 April 2021 we expanded our WaterCare Tariff to include higher bill discounts for customers who need a greater depth of support.	

Area	Question/Challenge	Company response	Panel actions
Government Contribution	What are customer views on the £50 contribution?  What is the potential impact of losing the £50 contribution?	The £50 subsidy addresses the unfairness of historically high charges in the South West with c3% of the population of England and Wales paying for the clean-up of a third of the country's bathing waters.  Our research illustrates 76% of customers consider losing the £50 government contribution to be unacceptable.  Affordability tracking analysis shows there are some customers who currently find their bill affordable, due to the benefit of the £50 subsidy. Removing it would mean about 11,000 more SWW households would have unaffordable bills across the region.	As an independent body, established to represent the interest of customers the Panel will advocate to Government's to continue the £50 contribution next year and for the remainder of the current parliamentary period to ensure the government's commitment to correct this historical unfairness is delivered for customers.
Green recovery	How is SWW supporting the Green Recovery Initiative?	The pandemic has changed the lives of everyone, whatever their personal circumstances, now and for the longer term.  As a large regional employer and provider of vital public services we take our role in the community very seriously. The South West experienced some of the highest rates of furlough across England and Wales. The economic impact differs substantially by sector, with accommodation, hospitality and recreation hardest hit – industries that the South West heavily relies on.	The Panel welcomed and supported the company's plans in this area.
		At South West Water, our resilience in these tough times, our ability to deliver sustained on-going performance, together with the reshaping of the Pennon Group with a focus on UK water, means we are well positioned to step up and play our part with our new proposed Green Recovery Initiative.  Our Green Recovery Initiative will provide much	
		needed investment and supports the creation of up to 500 regional jobs over the period to 2025, benefits the wider supply chain and provides opportunities for South West Water's existing workforce to gain new green skills. We intend to do this by bringing forward investment, accelerating delivery of current plans, and developing new and innovative solutions to the issues facing us today and in the future.	

Area	Question/Challenge	Company response	Panel actions
Customer engagement	How does the company engage with customers on the environment and other topics?  What is the company approach to increasing importance of digital service inclusion?  Review of Ofwat's proposal for future customer engagement.	Research and engagement are at the heart of our operations and day to day business – we listen to customers to understand priorities.  Customer priorities are used to drive the development of our Board pledges, outcomes, business plans and ways of working.  This includes the use of customer focus groups, which was an important feature in developing business plans with c.70 held during the last price review.  The role of the new WaterShare+ Advisory Panel will be critical in representing the views of customers going forward.  The company explained that customers can engage and communicate in a variety of ways, both digital and other methods so that individual customers can choose what fits their individual circumstances	The Panel noted the report presented and advised of the intention to commission further research to help lead meaningful conversations to understand customer interest and concerns even further.  The Panel has responded to Ofwat with questions centred around how regional priorities will be assessed and validated. The Panel will consider Ofwat's research methodology once published.
Pollutions and achieving environmental leadership	Outline the company's environmental leadership performance and highlight areas of focus.  What are the company's plans to reduce wastewater pollutions?  How are South West Water using combined sewer overflows?	We take our role as custodians of the environment very seriously and are committed to helping people across the South West and Bournemouth enjoy the places they love.  The environmental performance measures across our Outcome Delivery Incentives (ODIs), Environmental Capital framework and Green Recovery proposals are based on customer priorities following both our most extensive research yet in developing our business plan and our ongoing customer research.  Our promise to the planet – at South West Water we also have ambitious plans to transform how we produce and use energy and our mission is to bust our operational carbon emissions and hit Net Zero by 2030.  Our strategy is driven by changing operational practices, focusing on self-generation, and reversing carbon emissions. Put simply, we are focused on how we create and use energy in the most efficient way and how we can innovatively use our local environment to reverse carbon emissions for decades to come. The activities are founded around 'three pillars' which under-pin our Net Zero to 2030 approach:	The Panel has requested

Area	Question/Challenge	Company response	Panel actions
Pollutions and achieving		Sustainable living     Championing renovables	
environmental leadership continued		<ul><li>Championing renewables</li><li>Reversing carbon emissions.</li></ul>	
continued		We care deeply about the environment and are currently investing £150 million in our largest environmental programme for 15 years.	
		We have also been redoubling efforts in those areas where performance isn't where it needs to be, particularly around pollutions. We have halved the average monthly pollutions since implementing a new plan in September 2020, closing the gap through innovation, root cause analysis and improving control systems. This, together with additional resources, training and a relentless focus on delivering for customers and the environment.	
		We have also been driving environmental improvements with award winning catchment management plans in our supply areas, with over 85,100 hectares improved in the first half of the year.	
		We have accelerated our biosecurity/invasive species work and have delivered measures at 46 sites against our full year plan of 21 – doubling our original target. This will include a UK first biosecurity washdown facility at Roadford lake which is used extensively for leisure facilities. We have planted over 100,000 trees and increased our planned commitment from 100,000 to 250,000 trees target by 2025.	
		We have a pollutions reduction strategy, to improve performance to targeted levels. This focuses on activities and investments that will give the most benefit, reflecting lessons learned and discussions with the Environment Agency.	
		Our plans have been published and explain how we monitor performance and use data to inform investments.	

Area	Question/Challenge	Company response	Panel actions
Pollutions and achieving environmental leadership continued		SWW highlighted the importance that environmental performance has on the regional economy and wellbeing of our communities within our operating region. This is why SWW takes the guardianship of the natural environment very seriously. We are currently investing £150 million in our largest environmental programme for 15 years, with a commitment to reduce pollutions by 80% by 31 December 2024.	
		Demonstrable enhancements on pollutions performance are now being made and observed.	
		A combined sewer means that the sewer is doing two jobs as it receives base flows of wastewater from homes and businesses, but also peak flows of stormwater from the built and natural environment.	
		Storm water overflows are permitted by the Environment Agency who set the conditions needed to help protect receiving water quality.	
		South West Water recognises the public interest in the potential for pollution from storm overflows. During heavy rain stormwater overflows act as legal safety valves to prevent homes, gardens, roads and businesses being flooded.	
		SWW shared the work it is doing in respect of improving environmental performance noting SWW's Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (published on SWW website), Green Recovery plans and SWW's voluntary bathing water information service (Beach Live).	
		It was also noted that a storm overflow is not in itself a measure of an environmental impact and acts as an important trigger to investigate. Whilst water companies are often at the end of complex drainage systems, there are multiple causes including highways, private drainage, and rural run-offs. Working in partnership with others is key to having a plan for the region and protecting the environment	

Area	Question/Challenge	Company response	Panel actions
Board leadership and transparency	What is the governance structure of the company?	South West Water has always targeted the highest level of governance and we have further enhanced this in recent years with specific commitments made relating to Executive Remuneration and Dividend policies.	The Panel noted the report provided and accepted the company's dividend policy and Executive remuneration approach was transparent.
		Each year we publish our Annual Performance Report which focuses on the performance of the company and also includes significant disclosures on our corporate governance and alignment with these principles.	
Other	If water bills have come down over last 10 years, where will SWW get the funding for future investment?	SWW said that keeping bills as low as possible is a Board Pledge and the way this is achieved is being as efficient as possible so that any investments can be made in the best interests of customers for the longer term.	The Panel noted responses.
	Can customers revert to unmeasured charges after having a meter installed? How is South West Water helping customers who are on private water supplies?	Yes, any customer choosing to switch to a metered supply can revert to unmeasured charges within two years.  South West Water does give discount for the work that is required to install a new supply pipe to the water main. Our Green Recovery proposals also include a pilot to address the issues and risks faced from private supplies.	
	Has Brexit impacted disruption to water treatment chemical storage?	Like all companies South West Water is monitoring this situation closely and has taken action to ensure that supplies are sufficient.	

### Appendix 3.

### **South West Water Performance Summary**

South West Water has a range of outcome targets which apply across its South West and Bournemouth areas. These targets are based upon extensive research identifying key customer and other stakeholder priorities.

### Key

- Area of excellence
- Outperformance
- On track
- Marginal underperformance
- Area of focus

### How we're doing

#### **Area of Excellence**

Where performance has significantly exceeded our commitment and we believe the level of performance is sustainable based on measures taken and programmes underway

### 12

#### Outperformance

Where performance has demonstratably exceeded our commitment and we will continue to work to maintain outperformance.

### On track

15

Where performance has met or slightly exceeded our commitment (and one narrowly missed within regulatory deadband) and the Board remains confident commitments will be met in future years.

#### Marginal underperformance

Where the Board believes the Company has plans in place to quickly bring performance back within committed levels.

### Area of focus

Where the Board acknowledges significant work is required to achieve committed performance levels and is implementing published Executive-led improvement plans overseen by the Board with more frequent reporting to regulators and other stakeholders.

South West Water has met, exceeded or is within the regulatory deadband1/tolerance for 34 of it 44 performance commitments, however there are a number of areas of focus where plans have been developed to ensure performance commitments are achieved in future years.

South West Water's Board has categorised these 34 commitments as either areas of excellence, outperformance or on track as defined above.

The remaining ten commitments have been classified by the Board as either marginal underperformance

The Board is targeting achieving all commitments by the end of the 2020-25 regulatory period.

Section 3 of Regulatory Reporting (pages 171 to 178) contains a full breakdown of current year performance. prior year performance (where applicable) as well as regulatory financial rewards and penalties which are forecast to be applied for the year.

### I support it. It all seems like quite important things for them to be working on

SWW customer, Female, Age 18

(1) Treatment works compliance was not achieved this year but s within the regulatory deadband and is considered on track for future years.



#### Water





### 7 of 10

#### 2020/21 TARGETS MET/ON TRACK

- Water supply interruptions
- Mains repairs
- ✓ Unplanned outage
- Taste, smell and colour contacts\*
- O Water restrictions placed on customers
- Efficient delivery of the new Alderney WTW
- Water quality compliance (CRI)\*
- (X) Leakage
- Per capita consumption
- Efficient delivery of the new Knapp Mill WTW\*\*

### Wastewater



### 6 of 9

### 2020/21 TARGETS MET/WITHIN REGULATORY DEADBAND

- Internal sewer flooding
- Sewer collapses
- External sewer flooding incidents
- ✓ Sewer blockages
- Odour contacts from wastewater treatment works
- Treatment works compliance\*/\*\*\*
- Total wastewater treatment works (WWTW) compliance\*
- Descriptive compliance\*
- Compliance with sludge standard\*
- Calendar Year Incentive
- \*\* Two performance commitments have no commitment for 2020/21 but on track for future years' commitments
- \*\*\* Treatment works compliance was not achieved this year, but is within the regulatory deadband and is considered on track' for future years

#### **Customer**





### 11 of 12

#### 2020/21 TARGETS MET

- O D-MeX
- Operational contacts resolved first time water
- Operational contacts resolved first time wastewater
- Customer satisfaction with value for money
- O British Standard for Inclusive Service Provision
- Overall satisfaction of services received on the PSR
- Installation of AMR meters
- Number of customers on one of our support tariffs
- ✓ Voids for residential retail
- Percentage of customers who find their water bill affordable
- Priority services for customers in vulnerable circumstances

#### Sub-measures

- Priority services for customers in vulnerable circumstances reached
- Priority services for customers in vulnerable circumstances actual contacts
- Priority services for customers in vulnerable circumstances attempted contacts
- C-MeX

#### **Environment**



### 3 of 6

#### **2020/21 TARGETS MET**

- Biodiversity enhancement
- Biodiversity compliance\*
- Biodiversity prevent deterioration
- Pollution incidents (v7)\*
- Number of pollution incidents cat 1-3 (water only)\*
- EPA\*

### Resilience



### 5 of 5

#### **2020/21 TARGETS MET**

- O Resilient water and wastewater services on the Isles of Scilly
- Resilience in the round wastewater
- Resilience in the round water
- Risk of sewer flooding in a storm
- Risk of severe restrictions in a drought

### Community



2 of 2

#### 2020/21 TARGETS MET/ON TRACK

Bathing water quality

Abstraction incentive mechanism\*\*

### Appendix 4.

### **Glossary**

### **AMP**

Asset Management Plan period

### **Company**

South West Water

### **CCW**

The Consumer Council for Water

### EA

The Environment Agency

### **New Deal**

South West Water's Business Plan for the period 2020-2025

### **Ofwat**

Water Services Regulation Authority

– the economic regulator of the water industry

#### **Panel**

The WaterShare+ Advisory Panel

### **Performance Commitment**

Performance measures set by Ofwat in the PR19 Final Determination

### **PR19**

Price Review 2019







