

WONDERFUL ON TAP



Severn Trent
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Ranil Jayawardena MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
By e-mail

21 September 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

Improving water company performance on the environment, water security and resilience

I am writing to set out how Severn Trent will help to achieve success in the five areas you rightly challenged the sector on when you met with us on 7 September.

The performance of our sector is not uniform, with considerable variation between companies, however we know that more can and needs to be done to meet our customers' expectations. At Severn Trent, we have delivered very strong performance over the past few years in three key areas: (i) the environment – we have achieved the Environment Agency's Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA) 4 star status in four of the last five years; (ii) service delivery – we have met or exceeded our targets for the highest number of service metrics in the sector; and (iii) financial resilience – we were the only company to be in the top three in both of Ofwat's most recent financial resilience and service delivery assessments. This performance gives us a great foundation to build upon and move quickly in the areas you identified.

We have already developed plans to go further in the five areas and below I summarise our plans to accelerate improvements, with more detail included in the annex.

Environmental performance

While we have a strong track record on the EPA, we are determined to go further. A key focus is pollution reduction: over the last decade we have reduced pollution incidents by c.50%, and serious pollutions by almost 80%; and with this momentum we are on track to halve pollutions between 2020-2025 – bettering our Environment Agency and Ofwat targets for the current 5-year planning period.

We are pushing to reduce our impact on climate change by committing to being Net Zero by 2030, despite the water sector being a heavy user of energy. We already use 100% renewable electricity, we have invested over £300m of our own money in developing a renewable energy business, and are creating plans to increase our self-generation from 53% of our electricity needs to further build resilience through self-sufficiency.

We also have a global perspective, seeking to learn from the best as well as sharing our own expertise. Last week, we announced a partnership with Aarhus Vand (in Denmark) and Melbourne Water with the aim of reducing carbon emissions by around a million tonnes and leading the green transformation of our sector.

Sewage discharges from storm overflows

We are the first to accept that our sector has failed to meet growing public expectations about rivers – and most visibly - the use of storm overflows.

Following extensive engagement with our stakeholders, we were the first company to commit to reducing storm overflow activations to an average of 20 per year by 2025, and to an average of 10 per year by 2045 (ahead of the Government's 2050 target). With a range of initiatives underway, including a £25m scheme in Stroud, and a £76m surface water removal project in Mansfield, we are forecasting speedy and tangible progress.

We understand the desire to go even further and faster than even this – and while we had planned to target 23.7 this year, and 21.9 next year - our proactive efforts and the very dry weather means we are pleased to share with you that we are on track to achieve less than 20 in 2022. We will of course work flat-out to achieve again in the following year, although wetter weather will make it more challenging.

While storm overflow activations are concerning, they account for around 3% of the 'reasons for not achieving good ecological status' (RNAGS). Far broader action is needed. That is why in March this year we launched five 'Get River Positive' Pledges designed to lead a transformation of our region's rivers.

Our Pledges commit us to: addressing all of our RNAGS by 2030 (and with recent progress, we expect around 15% of RNAGS in our region will be attributable to us); supporting farmers to play their part with £30,000 grants (available to all 9,000 farmers in our region); and creating 15km of rivers that reach bathing standards by 2025 (with £78m of investment underway).

Water security and drought

Despite having the driest five-month period since 1891, this year we managed to avoid using temporary use bans (TUBs) through our sustained focus on: (i) reducing leakage; (ii) helping customers to reduce peak demand; and (iii) maximising the output from our works. The stark truth is, however, that the continued prolonged drought means our reservoirs are lower than we would like and so we are now undertaking a range of activities to minimise the risk to next summer's supplies.

We are, for example, working with customers to help them reduce demand – and save around £700 each on energy in the process – through TV and radio advertising, supported by 100 community champions who will help people find opportunities to save water in their homes. We are also working hard to bring new supplies on tap by, for instance, exploring options with organisations including the Canal and River Trust, and in response to Environment Agency guidance, looking at effluent re-use options for summer 2023. We are also investing over £135m in a scheme to accelerate the delivery of an additional 93ML/d of peak capacity, enough to supply a city the size of Derby, by 2025.

As water resources is a national challenge, we are seeking to help other regions. Specifically, our engineers are working on options that could allow us to fast-track supplies into the South East using the Grand Union Canal. This would have the added benefit of helping to reduce pressure on those companies that draw water from chalk streams.

Leakage

Leakage is a totemic issue for our sector, and we have embraced Ofwat's challenge of achieving a c.15% reduction by 2025 and also committed to achieving a 50% reduction by 2045 – five years ahead of the National Infrastructure Commission's target. We have already met our leakage reduction targets in 10 out of the last 11 years, and are preparing proposals for discussion with Ofwat to see how we might be able to fast-track our leakage reduction plans.

Dividends and rewards

Shareholder dividends and rewards have faced intense scrutiny in recent months. We believe that to deliver the best possible outcomes for our customers and the environment, rewards should be based on performance, and where we succeed, all parties should share in this success.

When declaring the dividend each year, our Board considers our performance in the round, including the assessment of environmental performance by our regulators, customer ODIs and the results of our financial viability assessment. Our communities benefit from our success – by 2025, around £10m of our profits will be redistributed to community-based schemes via a Community Fund which is overseen by a panel of our customers.

Our approach to employee reward is also based on our performance in the round - less than half of our bonus scheme is based on financial performance. For 2022/23, our Remuneration Committee has approved a change that makes the link to river water quality even stronger by carrying a weighting of 8% of the total bonus, and increasing the proportion of measures relating to the environment to 20%.

Conclusion

I am fully aware that in recent months trust in the water sector has been shaken. My commitment is that Severn Trent will do everything we can to help ensure our sector is a globally recognised success story. To that end, we will be looking to engage Ofwat and the EA to discuss how we could accelerate progress across four key areas:

- Creating new supply capacity through effluent reuse schemes ahead of next summer;
- Developing proposals for discussion with Ofwat to fast track our leakage reduction;
- Delivering the UK's first large scale demand management programme over the coming winter; and
- Delivering the Government's CSO targets 5 years early.

We look forward to working with you and your team to achieve these goals quickly and tangibly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liv Garfield', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Liv Garfield
Chief Executive

Our plans in more detail

We set out our plans in each of the five areas raised in more detail below.

Environmental performance

We are advocates of the Environment Agency's EPA as a means to provide an independent, transparent and comparable assessment of companies' environmental performance for our customers and stakeholders.

We have a strong track record on the EPA, having secured 4* status in four of the last five years. Since its introduction in 2011, we have driven improvements across the EPA measures, and notably a 53% reduction in pollution incidents; and a 78% reduction in serious pollution incidents.

We also recognise that we cannot stand still - not least because the Environment Agency quite rightly continues to ratchet its assessment so that it becomes more challenging, but even more so, because we know that there is more that we can achieve for the environment. We are also very aware that this year's EPA scores for the sector as a whole have only served to compound public concerns about river water quality and continued strong performance is needed to underpin public trust.

Pollutions are a key focus for us in the current year – serious pollutions was the only measure against which we scored 'amber' rather than green in the Environment Agency's 2021 assessment (due to a burst water main) and we were disappointed that we did not maintain our best-ever equalling performance from our wastewater assets the prior year. We are determined to address this and are using a data-driven approach to identify potential risks – we are in the process of installing 40,000 new sensors on our sewers and have developed predictive models to identify risks from our pumping stations. As well as ensuring we secure a green assessment next year on both EPA pollution measures, we have set ourselves the ambition to go beyond the pollution reduction targets set by Ofwat for 2020-25 and the Environment Agency by halving pollutions over this time period.

While we are strong advocates of the EPA, it's important to emphasise that we do not limit our environmental ambition to the six sub-measures it covers, or indeed the performance commitments we make to Ofwat in our business plans. As well as the huge focus we place on the need to adapt our services to climate change, we must also play our part to mitigate it. In 2019, we therefore announced our Triple Carbon Pledge, and committed to operational Net Zero emissions, 100% renewable energy and an all-electric fleet (where technology is available) by 2030.

Treating wastewater in a low carbon way is one of the biggest barriers to achieving net zero by 2030. It is necessarily energy intensive and with the innovations needed for change still in their infancy, collaboration is essential. Last week we launched a pioneering international partnership with Aarhus Vand (in Denmark) and Melbourne Water to co-create the development of technologies and innovations to make wastewater treatment greener, and begin to establish new international standards for measuring and reporting emissions. Together, we have committed to work together to reduce our carbon emissions by over a million tonnes and aim to lead the green transformation of the sector. This includes creating a world first Net Zero wastewater treatment works.

We already use 100% renewable electricity and are now building new plans to increase our self-generation (we are a sector leader and currently self-generate 53% of our electricity needs) to further build resilience through self-sufficiency. As well as solar and wind, we currently generate energy from food waste, of which 20% is collected and recycled in the UK. This has huge untapped potential, and if all food waste was collected and recycled, the UK could produce 1 billion cubic meters of methane each year. To put this into perspective – this is equivalent to the UK entire level of gas storage – so it has the potential to provide a significant level of energy resilience through an energy source that is not impacted by external factors. Government support to accelerate the planning process and unlock new grid connections would also

have a positive impact on our ability to increase generation and we would be pleased to work with Defra and BEIS as we finalise our new ambition in the coming weeks.

Sewage discharges from storm overflows

While there have been substantial improvements to the water sector's environmental performance - we are the first to accept there have also been some significant failings and, fundamentally, the sector has failed to meet growing public expectations as it relates to rivers – and most visibly - the use of storm overflows.

The increased roll-out of event duration monitoring (EDMs) achieved by our sector, as well as new citizen science initiatives, means that all stakeholders now have a new and emerging picture of the operation of storm overflows by each wastewater company – as set out in the table below.

Average number of activations reported by EDMs in 2021

	Southern	Wessex	Severn Trent	North-umbrian	Anglian	Dwr Cymru	Thames	York-shire	South West	United Utilities	Total/average
Average number of activations per storm overflow	20.2	22.4	24.7	25.3	25.6	29.5	31.9	33.6	38.9	41.8	29

Reducing the activation of overflows is one of the most pressing issues the sector has faced since privatisation, and we know we need to demonstrate rapid performance improvements - particularly if we are to rebuild customer trust. We are acting in two ways:

First, we are working to ensure that we have the best possible insights on our performance. Our sector has committed to securing 100% EDM coverage by 2023, and we are targeting having all of our EDMs installed by the close of 2022. We have rapidly expanded the coverage of EDMs in the last three years, and while we now have an increasing wealth of data, it comes from a relatively new technology portfolio. We are using a team of data scientists and technical experts to ensure we use this data to best effect to understand our performance, including where there may be challenges with data accuracy and reliability that need to be addressed.

Second, following extensive customer and stakeholder engagement (including Philip Dunne MP, the Duke of Wellington and a range of NGOs and special interest groups) we have made a public commitment to reduce the average number of reported activations a year to 20 by 2025 (from our current 25). To achieve this, we already have a number of solutions underway including:

- capacity upgrades on storm tanks, (which is also helping to create the first bathing standard rivers in Warwickshire and Shropshire);
- large capital schemes to increase the capacity of our network in key locations, including a £25m scheme in Stroud on target for completion in Autumn 2023;
- use of nature-based treatment solutions such as reed beds to treat wastewater; and
- surface water removal with our £76m project in Mansfield, showcasing what is achievable with blue-green solutions.

We were the first company to commit to achieving an average of 20 activations a year by 2025 (and this has now been embedded as a sector-wide target by Ofwat in its methodology for PR24), and we have also committed to achieving an average of 10 activation a year by 2045 – five years ahead of the Government's target. We understand the desire to go even further and faster than even this – and while we had planned to target 23.7 this year, and 21.9 next year - our proactive efforts and the very dry weather means we are on track to achieve less than 20 in 2022, which we will work flat-out to achieve again in the following year.

Storm overflows are of obvious public concern but, as they account for around 3% of the 'reasons for not achieving good ecological status' (RNAGS), we need much broader action if we are to meet the Government's 25-year Environment Plan objective of 75% of rivers being in good status.

This year, we made a bold 'zero RNAGS by 2030' commitment – accelerating our part in supporting the Government's 25-year Environment Plan – and were the first in our sector to do so. There are 960 RNAGS that are attributable to our activities (which is around 18% of total RNAGs in our region). We are currently discussing our recent progress with the Environment Agency which we expect will bring this figure down to c.15% - giving us a positive start towards our commitment. We are prioritising eliminating those RNAGS caused by storm overflows and reducing overflows in areas Special Sites of Scientific Interest of high amenity value.

We are also supporting others to play their part as other sectors, notably agriculture, have a larger impact on the health of our rivers. This year, we launched our Regenerative Farming Pathway Package for Farmers. As well as the potential to secure £30,000 in match funding as part of our 'new deal', the regenerative package creates opportunities for all farmers in our region to benefit from pathways to improve soil structures, meaning less run off and fewer chemicals; reduced pollution from agriculture in rivers and groundwater; and engagement in the emerging carbon markets. It is important to emphasise that we need other sectors to address their impact if we are to ensure that water customers do not bear all of the cost of achieving the Environment Plan's objectives. But we also recognise that we must first show leadership and demonstrate tangible progress against our own RNAGS and hence our accelerated ambition.

It is also apparent that our society expects more than 'good ecological status' from our rivers with increasing focus on their recreational potential. We are on track with our £78m project to create the UK's first two stretches of bathing standard rivers by 2025 and are creating plans to double the amount of bathing quality rivers in the Midlands within 10 years.

We have set out these, and other commitments in five 'Get River Positive' Pledges that are designed to lead a radical revitalisation of our region's rivers. Our full suite of 'Get River Positive' Pledges are included as an annex to this letter, and are supported by a range of measures against which a (shortly to be announced) independent advisory panel will hold us to account for delivering our commitment.

Water security and drought

The challenging conditions of low rainfall and exceptionally high temperatures experienced this summer have underscored the importance of our sector adapting to climate change.

Despite experiencing the driest five months since 1891 this summer, we have managed to avoid using temporary use bans (TUBs) through our sustained focus on:

- leakage;
- working with customers to reduce demand during peak periods; and
- maximising the output from our works.

That said, our reservoirs are lower than we would like – particularly in the Derwent Valley - and while we only require an average winter's rainfall to refill ahead of next spring, we are not complacent and to be cautious are undertaking a range of activities to minimise the risk to next summer's supplies. This includes finding options to bring in new supplies and launching a new water efficiency campaign.

Promoting water efficiency in the winter months presents a unique challenge - encouraging demand reductions at a time when rainfall is perceived to be high and discretionary outdoor use is much lower, requires a different approach to that which our sector traditionally uses in summer peak periods. We are launching the UK's first ever mass winter campaign with the aim of the 8m people we serve each having c.25 interactions with our activity over the coming 3-4 month period

– over 200m touchpoints in total. In light of the cost of living challenges that some of our customers are facing, it will focus on the energy savings that come from reduced water consumption (up to £700 per year).

Our campaign is already underway and is using a wide range of media including TV, radio and social media as well a ‘boots on the ground’ by deploying 100 community champions to undertake in person visits to help our customers and 40 community pop-up events in Derbyshire and Leicester. It will not only be important for our 2022/23 water resources position, but also provide significant learning for our sector as we tackle the challenges of climate change longer term.

As well as demand management measures, to improve our region’s resilience we are actively discussing options to bring new sources of water into supply ready for summer 2023 by, for example, working with stakeholders including the Canal and River Trust, and exploring effluent re-use options. We are also investing £135m in a scheme to accelerate the delivery of an additional 93MI/d of peak water resource capacity – enough to serve a city the size of Derby - while creating an additional 46 hectares of biodiversity benefit. The scheme involves using an abstraction licence we purchased from a decommissioned power station at Rugeley, a new pipe transfer, trialling lower-carbon treatment approaches and the creation of wetlands and floating reed-beds pre-treatment to remove nutrients. It will be ready in 2025.

Water security is a national challenge, and we are playing our part to deliver the Government’s objectives for long-term resilience by progressing the development of the following Strategic Resource Option (SRO) schemes to support the transfer of water resources:

- Under development with United Utilities and Thames Water, the **Severn to Thames Transfer** could create up to 500MI/d additional capacity by moving water from a number of sources in Wales, the North West and the Midlands to the South East of England via the Rivers Severn and Thames.
- The **Grand Union Canal** scheme being developed with Affinity Water and the Canal and River Trust is exploring using existing canal infrastructure to provide up to 100MI/d of additional capacity.
- Working with Yorkshire Water, we are investigating expanding reservoir capacity by up to 120MI/d in the **Upper Derwent Valley**.

Our SROs also include exploring the potential to provide new water sources to support the first two transfer schemes listed above, including treated effluent from our Minworth works near Birmingham.

Ofwat, working with the DWI and Environment Agency, has supported the acceleration of SROs and greater industry collaboration by creating the Regulators’ Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development (RAPID). Our next key milestone is to submit Gate 2 (detailed proposals) to RAPID in the autumn (with the Upper Derwent Valley to follow in 2023), with a view to them ultimately being included in future regional water resource management plans.

We also recognise that the situation in the South East is currently very difficult and so our engineers are working on options that could allow us to fast-track supplies into the region using the Grand Union Canal. This would have the added benefit of helping take pressure off those companies that draw water from chalk streams. We would be more than happy to share our developing proposal with your team.

Leakage

Leakage, much like river water quality, is a totemic issue for our sector. Ofwat was right at its last price review to point to a levelling out of the pace of leakage improvements achieved by our sector (with the majority of the 40% reduction achieved between 1996 and 2020 occurring in the early part of this period). This flattening in progress was in part because, historically, water availability made it uneconomic to drive further step changes. However, we fully recognise that in the prevailing circumstances this no longer the appropriate approach. We therefore embraced Ofwat’s challenge of achieving a 15% reduction by 2025, we have also committed to achieving a 50% reduction by 2045 – five years ahead of the National Infrastructure Commission’s target.

We have met our leakage reduction regulatory targets for 10 out of the last 11 years (the exception being 2017/18 reflecting challenges caused by the 'Beast from the East') and, are currently on track for this year. One of the key challenges our sector faces with a pipe network big enough to circle the equator 8.6 times, is finding leaks. This means that as well as our on-going programme of mains replacement, we have a strong focus on 'find and fix' approaches. Over the last year, we have increased the number of water technicians and assistant water technicians in our crews by 22% and 75% respectively. Since AMP6 we have reduced the average time to fix leaks by 35%, with 11% achieved in the last year alone, and are on track to improve again this year.

Water companies risk diminishing benefits from investment as we drive closer to zero leakage, but as a challenge faced globally, it is also an opportunity for collaboration and innovation. We are a founding member of the World Water Innovation Forum which facilitates information sharing with partners abroad, including trialling novel technologies like fibre optics. This complements our own focus on innovation, with a number of successes that we are now using operationally including AI to review the acoustic profile of our network and thermal imaging and drone technology to further boost our ability to find leaks.

Our experience globally and of other sectors, points to real-time, actionable information as being crucial to driving further reductions. Around 50% of our customers are now metered and this year we began a £20m trial in Coventry to install 157,000 smart meters and create our first 'smart network'. As well as empowering our customers to manage their consumption (and bills), smart meters provide the opportunity to improve resilience by targeting key interventions on peak demand, improve water balance insight and improve the speed and efficiency of measures to reduce leakage – including the quarter of all leakage that occurs on customers' own pipes (and is embedded in companies' reported performance figures).

Our current smart metering trial in Coventry was developed in response to the 'Green Recovery' joint initiative from Defra, Ofwat, the Environment Agency, the DWI, CCW and Natural England to create opportunities for new, innovative water sector investment, while supporting green economic growth. Through the Green Recovery, we secured approval for £566m of new or accelerated investment across seven projects (a number of which are discussed in this letter) – over two thirds of the total of £793m allowed across the sector - and are strong advocates of this type of innovative regulatory approach to drive sector focus on really challenging issues.

We are conscious of public expectations for faster progress in reducing leakage, which will only be compounded by having another record breaking hot and dry summer. We think leakage is itself now becoming a clear candidate for the type of innovative regulatory approaches used by Ofwat in recent times. For this reason we are building a business case for accelerating our leakage investment for discussion with Ofwat. This will be focused on a combination of accelerated mains replacement and utilising the insight from our smart meter programme in Coventry to tackle leakage on customer supply pipes.

Dividends and rewards

Shareholder dividends and rewards have faced intense scrutiny in recent months. We know some customers want reassurance that the approach we take is fair to all stakeholders and that any rewards are earned through strong performance. We believe that in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for our customers and the environment, where we succeed, all parties should share in this success. Our dividend and remuneration policies reflect this, and are underpinned by the robust governance and transparency expected not only of a FTSE100 company, but also of any organisation providing an essential public service.

Our dividend policy is reviewed and updated in line with our five-year price review cycle and takes into account our planned investment programme, the appropriate gearing level (which has been around the recommended regulatory level since privatisation, and is currently 58% against Ofwat's notional level of 60%), achieving a balance between an

efficient cost of capital and retaining an investment grade credit rating, and pension deficit contribution payments (which at 1.9% of our market cap are in good shape), as well as delivering an appropriate and sustainable return to shareholders. In reaching this decision, the Board considers a wide range of factors, including the interests of our customers, shareholders, employees, pensioners and our communities.

When declaring the dividend each year, the Board considers our performance across our obligations, including external independent assessment of our environmental performance by our regulators (including, for example our EPA performance), customer ODIs and the results of our financial viability assessment, which considers scenarios such as increased investment to manage large incidents. The Board also invites direct presentations on our company's performance from stakeholders such as the DWI, CCW and the Environment Agency to support it taking a balanced view of performance from multiple perspectives.

For the current AMP, in addition to the risk and reward sharing included in Ofwat's regulatory mechanisms, we took the decision to create a Community Fund to ensure that our communities further share in our success. By 2025, around £10m of our profits will be redistributed to community-based schemes via the fund which is overseen by a panel of customers who decide the grant awards. In its first two years, the fund has awarded around £4m in grants, together with an additional £1.6m of support we donated to help our communities deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like our dividend policy, our approach to employee reward is also based on performance assessments against a wide range of obligations including the environment, service to our customers, and the health and safety of our employees – with less than half of our bonus scheme relating to financial performance (PBIT). Our bonus scheme measures are aligned for all colleagues so that the same performance warrants the same percentage outcome, and every employee is rewarded for the same shared objectives.

Strong governance and oversight of executive remuneration is provided by our Remuneration Committee. As well as reviewing the formulaic outturn of our incentive schemes, the Committee's decision making process includes an 'assessment in the round' which considers factors including environmental compliance (informed by our EPA rating), treatment of our wider workforce and societal matters (such as COVID-19). It is supported by an independently prepared market assessment report.

For 2022/23 remuneration, the Remuneration Committee has approved a change to the bonus design for all employees which makes the link to river water quality even more explicit by including a new element related to our newly launched Get River Positive Pledges. This element will carry a weighting of 8% of the total bonus, and increases the proportion of measures relating to the environment to 20% - further strengthening the link between environmental performance and employee reward.

In summary

We are fully committed to demonstrating that we can, and already do, deliver for our customers and the environment:

- We are already performing strongly for our customers (as recognised in Ofwat's financial and service reports) and the environment (highlighted by our EPA 4* status). In the FTSE100 too, we have been ranked first in a league table that measures the environmental, social and ethical performance of companies (the Tortoise Index).
- We are ambitious that we can continue our strong EPA track record, and are acting quickly to restore trust in our sector's environmental performance by accelerating our ambition in relation to storm overflows and RNAGS – both of which are captured in our five Get River Positive Pledges. We are also looking at our environmental performance more broadly with our 2030 Net Zero commitment, global partnerships and expansion of renewable energy generation.
- While low rainfall has driven a challenging water resources situation this summer, our action to date has helped to negate the need for a TUB and we are actively pursuing innovative solutions to minimise the risk of future

restrictions, including a mass winter demand campaign and effluent reuse to bring more water into supply next year. And we are preparing proposals for discussion with Ofwat to further accelerate leakage reduction.

- Finally, we believe reward should be performance focused, and recognising the importance our customers place on our region's rivers, have further strengthened the link between employee recognition and environmental outcomes by introducing an 8% weighting focused on our Get River Positive Pledges.

Our Get River Positive Pledges

Ensure storm overflows and sewage treatment works do not harm rivers

- Based on Environment Agency measures (RNAGS), our operations will not be the reason for unhealthy rivers by 2030.
- Across our regions we will reduce the use of storm overflows to an average of 20 per year by 2025.
- Using better data we will find and fix problems quicker than ever before at no extra cost to customers.

Create more opportunities for everyone to enjoy our regions' rivers

- We will ensure that 90 percent of people in our regions live within an hour's drive of a bathing site.
- We will improve 50km of rivers in Warwickshire and Shropshire, creating 15km of bathing quality rivers by 2025 and have plans to double the amount of bathing quality rivers in the Midlands within 10 years.
- We will work with local clubs to increase opportunities for water-based activities at our reservoir sites, starting this year.

Support others to improve and care for rivers

- We will collectively launch a new deal for farmers, that includes incentivising regenerative farming practices in our region and providing access to green financing (through partnership working).
- We will campaign for the removal of the automatic right to connect for new development, i.e. building new homes.
- We will champion the Bill to ban wet wipes that contain plastic and will lobby for a ban on all wet wipes that are not 'Fine to Flush'.
- Later this year we will launch a Get River Positive Community Fund to support community groups and charities wanting to/helping improve our region's rivers.
- We will use our convening powers to help others address their contribution to river health* including hosting a Midlands River forum to bring all contributors to river health together.

**Currently, 86% of rivers don't achieve good ecological status, with other sectors accounting for 76% of reasons for rivers not achieving good ecological status.*

Enhance our rivers and create new habitats so wildlife can thrive

- By 2030 we will have established new habitats for native species of wildlife, such as great crested newts, beavers, otters and cuckoos, in the Midlands – so our natural communities can thrive.
- Our River Rangers will work with community groups and organisations such as Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to care for rivers and address issues across our region.
- Our Get River Positive Community Champion volunteers will work with Waterside Care and the Canal and River Trust to clean and restore rivers and river banks across our region.
- We will plant over a million trees across our region by 2025, and 1.3 million by 2027.

Open and transparent about our performance and our plans

- We will work with NGOs to ensure we provide the river quality information people want and need to see by the end of 2022.
- We will make this information easily accessible via our websites by end of 2022.
- As well as 100% monitor coverage at our treatment works and on our storm overflows, later this year we will start monitoring wider river quality and share the results on our websites.