

Defra draft storm overflow discharge reduction plan

Joint statement from United Utilities Water and Yorkshire Water

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Defra's draft storm overflow discharge reduction plan, which represents the biggest single investment in the water environment for a generation.

In our individual consultation responses, United Utilities Water (U UW) and Yorkshire Water support the plan to drive incremental improvements and we welcome the government's commitment to a long term approach to investment to deliver resilience and environmental protection.

Around 63% of the improvement required across England would, however, take place in the North West and in Yorkshire, shared across just 22% of the national customer base. The weighting of investment to the North is driven by the historic legacy that over 50% of sewers in the North of England are combined sewers and carry both foul flows and rainwater. U UW and Yorkshire Water jointly serve some of the most income deprived areas in the country and, we believe the current proposals will have a bill impact on our customers of at least three times the national average amount set out in Defra's consultation.

Given the scale of the proposed investment and the potential customer impact, which falls disproportionately on those in the North of the country, we believe that more work needs to be done on the targets, approach and timescales to ensure this investment is affordable and delivers the benefits intended.

We will be submitting a further joint response to Defra's proposals, setting out how we believe the Government's proposals could be strengthened to ensure they deliver the best value to customers and the greatest benefit to the environment.

-ends-