

**Groundwork NE & Cumbria**

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**Date:** 15th April 2025

**RE: Support for Northumbrian Water Group's CMA Referral – 2025–30 Business Plan**

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of Groundwork North East and Cumbria, I am writing to express our support for Northumbrian Water Group's referral of Ofwat's Final Determination for their 2025–2030 Business Plan to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

As a delivery partner of Northumbrian Water, we have seen first-hand the organisation's commitment to improving environmental outcomes, addressing climate resilience, and investing in communities. We work closely together across a range of programmes that are already delivering tangible benefits for people and places, from enhancing biodiversity and protecting watercourses, to raising awareness and empowering communities through nature-based solutions.

We are particularly concerned that Ofwat's Final Determination did not fully fund essential improvements to asset health and climate resilience. These are not optional extras; they are critical enablers of long-term environmental protection. The scale and urgency of the climate emergency require investment in more robust infrastructure, including measures such as backup power systems at treatment works and sustained maintenance of ageing assets. Without this investment, the risk of pollution, flooding and ecological degradation will only increase.

NWG's Business Plan rightly proposes a significant uplift in investment in the environment, with £1.7 billion committed to improvements in rivers, coasts, and biodiversity. This aligns closely with our own strategic priorities for 2025–26, which focus on building climate-resilient communities, creating green jobs, and protecting and enhancing green and blue spaces, especially in areas of greatest need.

The proposed investment would accelerate shared ambitions and unlock opportunities for deeper, more integrated partnership working across the region.

We also welcome NWG's clear commitment to affordability and social inclusion. Their approach to supporting vulnerable customers while continuing to drive environmental progress is an important model for how essential services can deliver both sustainability and equity.

For these reasons, we support Northumbrian Water's appeal and urge the CMA to consider the critical role that resilience and asset health play in safeguarding environmental outcomes. Continued and increased investment in these areas will ensure long-term value for customers, communities, and nature.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with NWG and other stakeholders to deliver on the ambitions set out in the 2025–30 Business Plan.

Yours sincerely,  
Lisa Locke  
Head of Business Development  
Groundwork North East and Cumbria

