



Dear CMA Panel,

I am writing in my capacity as Chief Scientist and Technical Director of Tyne Rivers Trust to support Northumbrian Water Group's (NWG) referral of Ofwat's Final Determination for the 2025–30 Business Plan to the Competition and Markets Authority.

Tyne Rivers Trust is the only environmental charity dedicated to improving the River Tyne and its catchment. We work closely with partners, including NWG, to deliver landscape-scale river improvements that provide environmental, social, and economic benefits across the Northeast. Our work encompasses river restoration, habitat creation and pollution mitigation that contribute to the long-term resilience of both communities and the environment.

NWG has been an active partner in these efforts—demonstrating a willingness to co-design and deliver innovative approaches that support both regulatory compliance and wider ecological restoration. Their environmental ambition, underpinned by a proposed £1.7 billion programme, is a vital opportunity for progress at a time when our rivers face unprecedented challenges from climate change, pollution, and ageing infrastructure.

We are particularly concerned that Ofwat's determination fails to provide funding for key areas related to asset health and climate resilience. Without this investment, the risk of pollution events will continue to rise. Likewise, underinvestment in capital maintenance threatens to erode hard-won environmental gains and delay vital improvements.

From a catchment perspective, deteriorating infrastructure undermines not only NWG's core operations but also the success of collaborative efforts involving environmental charities like ourselves, communities, and local authorities. Our collective ability to improve water quality, reduce discharges from storm overflows, restore habitats, and engage the public in sustainable water management relies on a well-maintained and resilient water network.

We therefore support NWG's appeal to the CMA to enable meaningful, timely, and joined-up environmental action. We also welcome NWG's continued commitment to affordability and social support, which ensures that environmental investment does not come at the expense of vulnerable customers.

In summary, we believe NWG's business plan represents a responsible, forward-looking proposal that aligns with national goals for nature recovery and net zero, while maintaining strong regional partnerships that can deliver real outcomes. We urge the CMA to support this referral and the critical investments it seeks to unlock.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Jack Bloomer**

**Chief Scientist and Technical Director**

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