

# How we operate

## We've been supplying water to the local community for more than 170 years.

In autumn 2022, we published a draft plan for how we will provide a sustainable supply of water and take care of our environment for the next 50 years.

Our plan is known as our Water Resources Management Plan ('WRMP'). Population growth, climate change and the demand for water are putting significant pressure on the local environment and water resources in our supply area. If we do nothing, the area we supply faces a possible shortfall of 449 million litres a day by 2050. We produce a WRMP every five years and this one addresses the challenges we face in providing a reliable, resilient, sustainable, efficient and affordable water supply to customers between 2025 and 2075, while taking care of the environment.

The draft plan asked for feedback from customers and other stakeholders, to help shape our final plan, which we will publish in autumn 2023. Our plan has also been developed alongside the industry's first ever regional plan for water resources. It includes plans for lowering customer demand, reducing leakage more than ever before, smart metering and significant investment in new

infrastructure for new sources of water – working across the water industry to plan and share resources regionally. The plan will also make the region's water supplies more resilient to droughts.

## Our 50-year plan

### Challenges

Our biggest challenge is to deliver water to a growing population while achieving the ambitious targets on reducing abstractions that could affect flows in chalk streams. We forecast a large imbalance between the demand for water and the supplies we know are currently available. This challenge is even greater because our supply area is quite different to that of many other water companies. We have very little storage for raw water because we don't have large, open reservoirs. Instead, we abstract about 65% of our water directly from groundwater sources, with the remainder from rivers or transfers from other water companies.

South East England is also one of the most economically active regions in the UK. Future, sustainable water resources are a cornerstone to economic growth and to ensuring we can meet the water needs of a growing population and new businesses.

The way we address these challenges influences the size and shape of our draft plan.

