

An aerial photograph of a winding river or estuary flowing through a vast, green, marshy landscape. The water is a light blue-green color, contrasting with the deep green of the surrounding land. The sky is filled with soft, white and blue clouds, and the sun is setting on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Our shared vision for the future

Business Plan 2025-30

About this document

Every five years, Ofwat (the economic regulator) carries out a price review for all water and wastewater companies. It's a review of what water companies can invest in and what they can charge their customers.

We are required to produce a Business Plan that sets out all the things we want to deliver for you, our customers, such as reductions in leakage, or improvements in water quality.

We then submit our Business Plan to Ofwat for them to review, and they agree how much revenue we can collect from customer bills, and what level of service we need to provide to our customers in return.

This document is a simplified version of our Business Plan, aimed at those who want a quick and easy to read version of the full plan, which you can read [here](#).



Kaif, Meter Technician, Essex & Suffolk Water

Securing your water supply for generations to come

CEO welcome

East Anglia is one of the driest parts of the country and has been classified by the Environment Agency as a Serious Water Stressed Area.

The climate is changing, and the latest projections indicate that while winters may well be wetter, summers will be drier, and we can expect summer river flows to be lower.

We recognise that we must provide resilient water supplies and look after the environment for our current customers, and that we must do the same for future generations.

While we have ambitious plans for customers and the environment, there are long-term problems that we will not be able to fix overnight. Our customers demand and deserve reliable high quality drinking water so our long-term plan centres on building capacity to continue to deliver these services for generations to come. Even in the face of tough challenges such as climate change, extreme weather, and power outages.

As Essex and Suffolk are both classified as serious water stressed areas and are prone to drought, our plan is to introduce compulsory metering from 2025.

Currently 64% of all properties in Essex and 69% of properties in Suffolk have a water meter and all homes will be required to be fitted with a smart water meter by 2035.

How we will improve your services

Our plan will deliver major service improvements for customers in Essex and Suffolk. While increasing bills is never welcome, urgent investment in our water system is essential to ensure the security of our water supply in the future.

These new investments mean we will need to increase bills. The funds raised by increased water bills are guaranteed only to fund improvements in our water systems and if these improvements aren't delivered, funds will be returned to customers.

We understand any increase in bills won't be welcome at the current time. For some of our customers this will be incredibly difficult and there are lots of ways we can help anyone who is struggling to pay.

Throughout 2025-30 we will be investing £1.5bn in our region, creating 3,000 jobs a year across our business and adding c.£1.7bn to the local economy through employment and using local suppliers.



We promise to get the basics right and rectify things quickly when they go wrong, take responsibility, and offer compensation when appropriate.

74%

of customers accepted our plan*

What you told us

We're delighted that 74% of customers accepted our plan*.

Our plan focuses on what matters most to customers and communities and we work hard to make sure the customer voice informs the delivery and design of our services.

Improving the environment is important but you told us we need to balance this with rising bill costs.

Generally, customers have chosen not to go much further than the legal obligations, which are already very ambitious. Customers were supportive of nature-based solutions over hard engineering alternatives, and they told us that they expect us to work with others in our regions to solve difficult problems. This is something we have a lot of experience with. Our Trinity Boards partnership involving the Broads Authority, Natural England, Environment Agency and Norfolk Wildlife Trust has been working for more than 25 years to restore the habitats to their full potential, and to encourage sustainable enjoyment of sites by both the local community and visitors.

We acknowledge, however, that 46% of our customers thought it would be 'difficult' to afford.

How we will help those that need it most

We'll increase our support for customers to over £66m including an investor funded £20m hardship fund. We will support even more households with social tariffs.

Shared vision for the future

We will also support customers to change some of their behaviours and reduce their water consumption for the sake of the environment and future generations. This is a partnership; we are all citizens together.

We promise to get the basics right and rectify things quickly when they go wrong, take responsibility, and offer compensation when appropriate.

Our Business Plan for 2025-30 lays out ambitious goals for improving your services and further protecting the environment. We know the journey ahead will require focus and persistence but remain dedicated to creating a brighter future for Essex and Suffolk.

Heidi Mottram
CEO, Essex & Suffolk Water

*NWL Affordability and acceptability testing research, 2023

About us

We are a water only company. Your wastewater services will be provided to you by either Thames Water or Anglian Water.

About Essex & Suffolk Water

- 2.0 million customers
- Water production and distribution

Water

- 22 water treatment works
- 137 water pumping stations
- 68 water service reservoirs
- 2 reservoirs – impounding only
- 8,900km of water mains

People

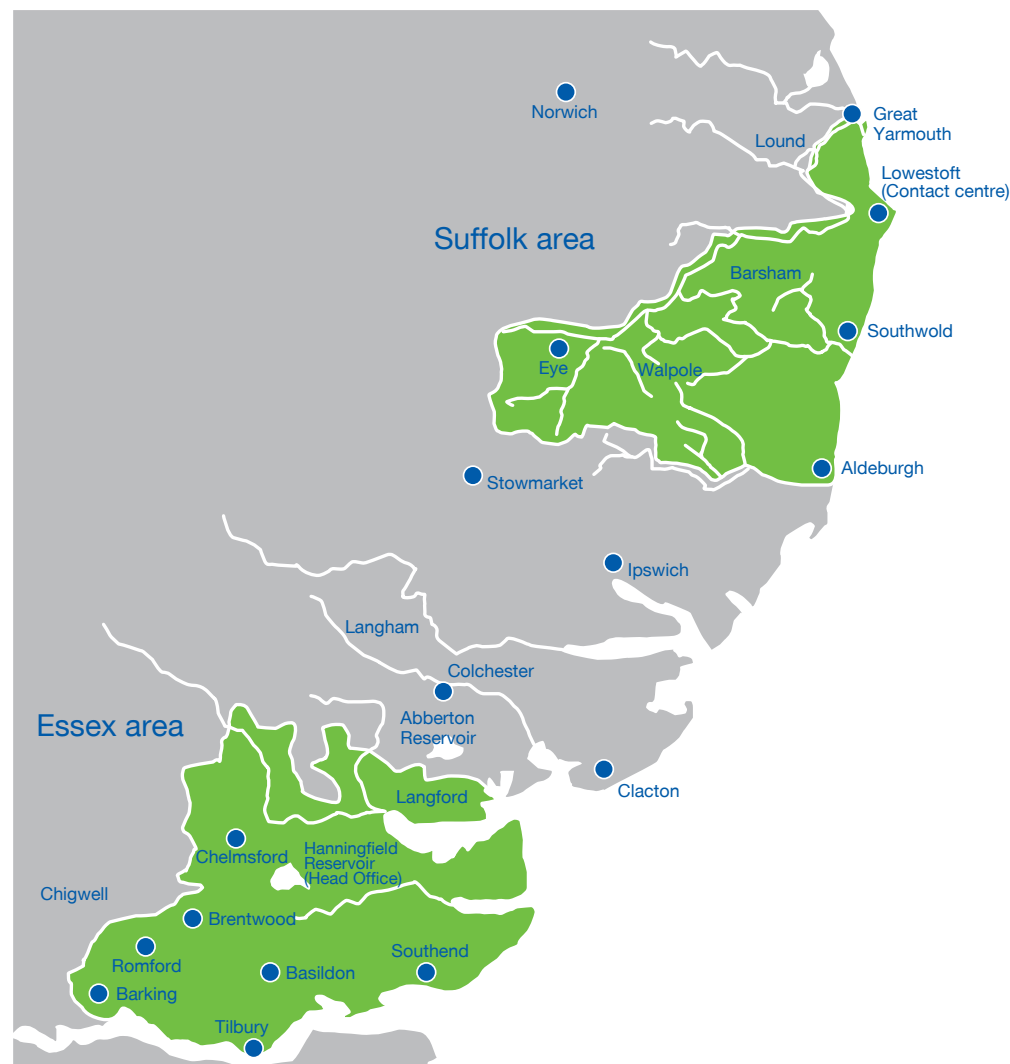
- 800+ employees
- 73% of our people say it's a [Great Place to Work](#), 2022



Our Purpose is caring for the essential needs of our communities and environment, now and for generations to come.

We do this by providing reliable and affordable water services for our customers.

We make a positive difference by operating efficiently and investing prudently, to maintain a sustainable and resilient business.




Your water services – our plan headlines

**Less leakage. Less interruptions.
More water. More innovation.
More support.**

We will deliver major improvements for our customers in Essex and Suffolk, including:

- Investing £386m in new water supplies to ensure the security of your water supply in the future.
- Investing £17.5m to reduce already the lowest leakage levels in the country.
- Improvements in drinking water quality.
- Lower risk of disrupted services to your water supply.
- We're already top in the industry for customer service and we intend to stay there.

 **19%**
reduction in
risk of disruption

Driving real change to protect our environment by:

- Helping our customers to use water wisely through compulsory metering (from 2025) and promoting water efficiency tips.
- Making sure your water supplies are resilient to a 1 in 500 year drought while making sure the water environment is protected.
- We're adopting low-carbon options where possible, such as building a new reservoir in North Suffolk and embracing nature-based solutions as a priority.
- Achieving net zero by 2050.

Boosting support for those households that need it most:

- More than £66m to support customers who are struggling to pay their bills.
- We will support 107,000 households with social tariffs.
- No customer will need to spend more than 5% of their income on water.
- Join our [Priority Services Register](#) if you have a disability, mobility, illness, mental health, communication need, life changes (such as pregnancy) or if you have children under the age of five.
- If you are struggling to pay your bill, talk to us, there are many ways [we can help](#).



There are many ways we can help you, from payment plans, low income discounts to advice on saving water which can help lower your energy bills too.

What we will be investing in:

- We're investing £1.5bn in total in the region. This is the largest investment programme in the last 30 years.
- This will increase resilience and secure water supply for the future, reducing the impact on the environment.
- £17.5m on reducing leakage using innovative new technologies.
- We'll protect our network from power failures and flooding by investing more than £8m on adapting for climate change.
- We will invest £25m to repair and replace the aging network of water pipes.
- £73.4m on helping you to save water by introducing compulsory meters and offering water saving tips.



£1.5bn
investment
in the region



£73.4m
to support
water saving

Your water bill:

We are a water only company. Your wastewater services will be provided to you by either Thames Water or Anglian Water.

- Bills will need to rise to £22 per month on average in 2025/26 increasing over time to £24.10 per month in 2029/30, excluding inflation. Overall, this is a 12.4% increase compared to 2020-25.
- This is substantially mitigated by the 9% bill reduction we delivered in 2020, which was the largest reduction in the sector.
- We're gradually increasing bills in line with customer feedback.
- The funds raised by increased water bills are guaranteed only to fund improvements in our water systems - and if these improvements aren't delivered, funds will be returned to customers.
- There are many ways we can help you, from payment plans, low income discounts to advice on saving water which can help lower your energy bills too.
- If you're struggling to pay your bills or falling into debt, please [get in touch](#).

Using water wisely

Making sure we have reliable supplies of water into the future and making sure that high quality water is delivered to customers' homes when they want it is a critical part of our service.

Reducing how much water we take from the environment, the effects of climate change and extra demand for water from a growing population and new businesses mean that we will not have enough water in the future unless we act now.

Our [Water Resource Management Plan](#) (WRMP) shows what we need to do to make sure we have reliable supplies of water in the future.

For 2025-30, this means building new water supplies and working with customers to reduce the amount of water we use – including reducing leakage.

Smart water meters measure how much water you use. They send us readings automatically using a secure network.

They are vital to help us protect our water supply for future generations. They help us understand water usage across all the communities we serve, so that we can find leaks and conserve water. All water companies in the UK will be rolling out smart meters in the next 15 years.

What are the advantages of a smart meter for me?

- Track your water usage on our app with hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly views.
- By saving water you reduce your carbon footprint and could also reduce your energy bills.
- Get an alert if there's a potential leak in your home.
- No more estimated bills.
- We don't need to visit your home to read your meter.

Click [here](#) for frequently asked questions about smart water meters.

How many swimming pools of water we will save per day by using water wisely during 2025-30

Reducing water use through water efficiency and metering activity



Reducing leakage from our pipes



Reducing leakage from customers' pipes



How customers and stakeholders helped to create our plan

Our Business Plan prioritises what matters most to customers and communities.

Feedback from customers and stakeholders has been carefully considered at every stage of our plan's development.

We've engaged with customers on areas where they could make meaningful choices to balance legal obligations and affordability. However, statutory requirements have driven a significant portion (over 90%) of where we need to invest.

We've also engaged with our stakeholders including local authorities, environmental non-government organisations, business organisations, members of parliament and many other interested groups.

Specific pre-acceptability testing was carried out with representatives from these groups to help us understand different perspectives on our proposed plan and our level of ambition. We held open sessions with customers and stakeholders that were facilitated by our regulators Ofwat and CCW (the Consumer Council for Water).



We've engaged with customers on areas where they could make meaningful choices to balance legal obligations and affordability.

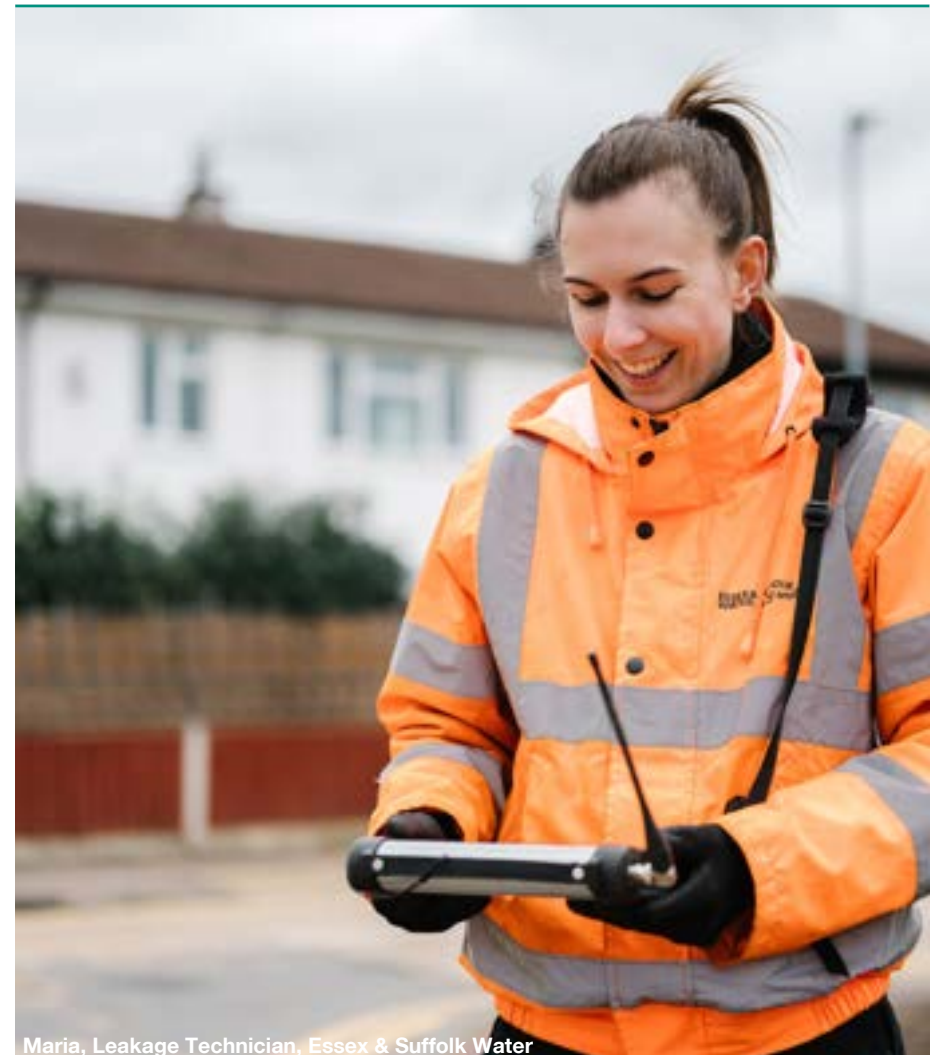
Stakeholders, including businesses and local authorities, were deeply involved in the plan's development, especially concerning water resources.

[The Water Forum](#), an independent challenge group made up of industry regulators, subject experts and independent members, has challenged us and given confidence this is the right plan for our customers.



We examined areas including how this Business Plan fits with the company's long-term strategy; and the affordability of the plan for customers, particularly those struggling to pay. We believe that Essex & Suffolk Water aimed to build as good a Business Plan as it could, in very challenging circumstances."

The Water Forum, an Independent Challenge Group
[Click here](#) to read its full report.



Maria, Leakage Technician, Essex & Suffolk Water

Our Long-term strategy

Our long-term ambition as a company that provides an essential public service is driven by the aspirations of our customers and the legal requirements set by government and our regulators.

We work hard to make sure we deliver the best possible outcomes for our customers and the environment at the lowest possible cost. To make sure we make the right decisions for the future, we make long-term plans.

To make sure we can continue to deliver clean, clear drinking water to 2050 and beyond, even in the most severe droughts, we have a [Water Resource Management Plan](#).

We also need to change the way we operate to help deliver across a range of long-term targets set by the government in its [25 Year Environment Plan](#) and have developed our own [Environment strategy](#) to meet and go beyond the targets in the Government's plan.

Many factors can impact the way we operate. For example, in Essex we know we need to increase the water supply to accommodate a growing population, demand from businesses for more water and to make sure we are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Whether we do this through a water reuse plant or a new winter storage reservoir is dependent on how quickly we can reduce water use through smart meters and water efficiency tips. And in Suffolk, we're going to complete more work to see if we can build a winter storage reservoir more quickly and instead of a Lowestoft water reuse scheme. In the long term, a reservoir is a better and more environmentally friendly option.

But the further into the future we go, the less data and evidence exists, and therefore the future becomes more and more uncertain. Our pipes and treatment works age, the population grows, scientific progress will identify more challenges, technology will create opportunities, and laws will change.

Our Long-term strategy is therefore an adaptive plan, which will allow us to respond to a changing world. We have assessed how we would need to respond over a variety of plausible futures so that we can plan to deliver effectively now and always.

Through our strategy we are investing in our people, innovation and partnership working so we can continue to deliver unrivalled customer experience and protect and enhance the environment. To read more about our long-term plans click [here](#).



We work hard to make sure we deliver the best possible outcomes for our customers and the environment at the lowest possible cost.



Patrick, future Essex & Suffolk Water customer

Next steps

Ofwat will review our Business Plan and in May / June 2024 will give us its draft determination to calculate our price controls and in December 2024 we will receive our final determination, where prices will be set for 2025-30.

If you would like to find out more about our Business Plan you can join our next **Your water, your say session on Thursday 9 November 2023 from 6.00pm - 8.00pm.**

This is an online session, facilitated by Ofwat and CCW (Consumer Council for Water), where customers and other stakeholders can pose questions to their water company about issues that are important to them, including priorities for the future, in a public environment. Click [here](#) to register.

If you aren't online, we can provide support so you can still take part. Please call us on **0345 782 0111** and we can help.



Levington Creek, Suffolk

