love every drop
anglianwater

A year of progress on river health

2023

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Our Get River Positive Commitments

Commitment 1

Ensure storm overflows, sewage treatment works and abstraction do not harm rivers

Commitment 2

Create more opportunities for everyone to enjoy our region's rivers

Commitment 3

Support others to improve and care for rivers

Commitment 4

Enhance our rivers and create new habitats so wildlife can thrive

Commitment 5

Be open and transparent about our performance and our plans

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Introduction from Dr Robin Price, Director of Quality and Environment

We want our rivers and waterways to be the healthiest they can be. Get River Positive is our commitment to protect and revitalise rivers, underpinned by five bold, meaningful commitments.

Anglian Water's Purpose is to bring environmental and social prosperity to the region we serve through our commitment to Love Every Drop. Get River Positive is an example of our Purpose in action.

This report provides an annual update against our five Get River Positive commitments to enhance river health, which we set in 2022, in collaboration with Severn Trent. According to The Rivers Trust's latest annual report[1], assessments show that none of England's river stretches are in good or high overall health. With many complex factors at play, making improvements to river health will take time, collaboration and investment. We can only improve the state of rivers by working together.

Over the last 12 months we have identified projects and partnerships to take forward, in line with our vision to deliver improvements that benefit whole catchments and transform landscapes.

We're now investing in 53 fantastic projects, working closely with the agricultural community, landowners, citizen scientists, rivers trusts, charities and more, as shown across in the map. Our shareholders' commitment of £7 million has enabled us to unlock match funding of over £9 million. Through these partnerships, we are achieving far more than any single player could alone.

One example is our work on the River Deben, where we are supporting the community with achieving inland bathing water status, establishing a farm cluster group to explore nature-based regeneration opportunities and supporting improvements to ecological health through investments to reduce the level of phosphate and storm spills.

Another area we're making progress on is restoring the original natural shape of rivers across our region. This means correcting centuries of modifications, which were made to manage flow to support farms and industry, as well as provide transport benefits. Evidence suggests that physical forms of rivers need to look drastically different to accommodate the more extreme floods and droughts we're experiencing as a result of climate change, deliver biodiversity benefits while boosting carbon storage[2].

1 State of our Rivers Report 2024, The Rivers Trust

2 www.worldenergydata.org/opinion-we-have-forgotten-what-a-natural-river-even-looks-like/

Our partnership with the Norfolk Rivers Trust and additional stakeholders is supporting the restoration of the river Stiffkey back to its original state; reconnecting it to the floodplain, reducing sediment build-up and facilitating natural flood management, which in turn will support biodiversity.

Going further in AMP8

We are an industry under scrutiny and we recognise our responsibility to protect and enhance the blue and green spaces of the region we serve.

We are working hard to reduce the impact of our operations. Our Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) saw us invest over £100 million into schemes this year, the majority of which covered wastewater monitoring.

Over the next year to 2025, our shareholders have agreed an additional £100 million to tackle storm spills and pollution events, over and above the level agreed by Ofwat.

Our customers rightly want us to go further and our business plan proposals to Ofwat for AMP8 (covering the period 2025-2030) do just that.

Worth £9 billion, our plan proposes an a record investment of £4 billion to enhance the environment. This includes almost £600 million on our WINEP, £61 million on reducing flood risk, £138 million on nutrient neutrality and £308 million on resilience. Our plan will also see us explore more nature-based solutions, such as treatment wetlands, to further reduce nutrients from our water treatment processes. Discussions with our regulators on our plan are ongoing — find out more in our business plan.

Get River Positive is demonstrating the power of partnership working and the benefits of using nature to deliver improvements at both a catchment and landscape level. These projects will act as a springboard as we move into 2024, with many of the projects and partnerships continuing into AMP8. The work we are doing now will provide a blueprint for our Advanced Water Industry National Environment Programme (A-WINEP).

Our pioneering A-WINEP seeks new methods of delivery for the industry. We aim to generate a body of evidence to show that focusing on environmental outcomes will deliver more than traditional methods focussed on outputs. This will allow us to develop an innovative regulatory model, focused on using nature-based solutions, improved multi-stakeholder governance and blended funding to maximise value and outcomes for consumers and the environment.

Furthermore, between 2025-2030, we will seek to create a Partnership Centre of Excellence that will continue to bring together stakeholders to deliver improvements in river and coastal waters through a nature-first approach, alongside a Partnership Grant Fund, to support emerging partnership opportunities within target catchments.

Through Get River Positive, we will continue to demonstrate that a multi-sector approach focused on delivering environmental improved outcomes, will result in cumulative, positive changes to river health. We know we can't do this alone. This report shines a light on the fantastic partnerships we've developed that bring together dedicated people across whole catchments and landscapes, to Get River Positive.

Dr Robin Price
Director of Quality and Environment

The state of river health in England

Rivers across the UK have been modified and fragmented by barriers and face multiple threats from chemicals, nutrients and pollutants from a range of sources, as shown in Figure 1.

According to data from the Environment Agency (Figure 1), water companies are responsible for 27% of the Reasons for Not Achieving Good Status (RNAGS). In our region, it's 18% – but this is still too high. We aim to eliminate our impact, through investments in our own assets and by working with others.

Anglian Water is permitted to take (abstract) water from the environment and to return (discharge) used water, once it has been treated. Each abstraction and discharge is subject to permit conditions set by the Environment Agency.

Of the 27% of total RNAGS associated with the water sector in our region, the majority of these are related to treated water we discharge into the environment from Water Recycling Centres. This water is clean but can be high in nutrients (Figure 2).

To tackle this, we are focusing on reducing the nutrients and chemicals in the water we return to the environment. By the end of 2025, our phosphorus reduction programme will improve river heath across 104 waterbodies, including removing 165 confirmed, probable, or suspected RNAGS.

At Water Recycling Centres with new or existing permit limits for phosphorus, we will have reduced levels entering rivers and streams in our region by 53% on 2020 levels. By 2030, we are forecasting a further phosphorus reduction of 50%[3]. And we are aiming to achieve an 80% reduction in nutrient loading by 2038, against a 2020 baseline, as required under the Environment Act.

9% of RNAGS relate to storm spills: find out more on our work to reduce spills on page 9.

With the advent of technology and with support from government and regulators on our future investment plans, the impact of our operations on RNAGS will significantly reduce.

Figure 1: **National reasons for poor river health**

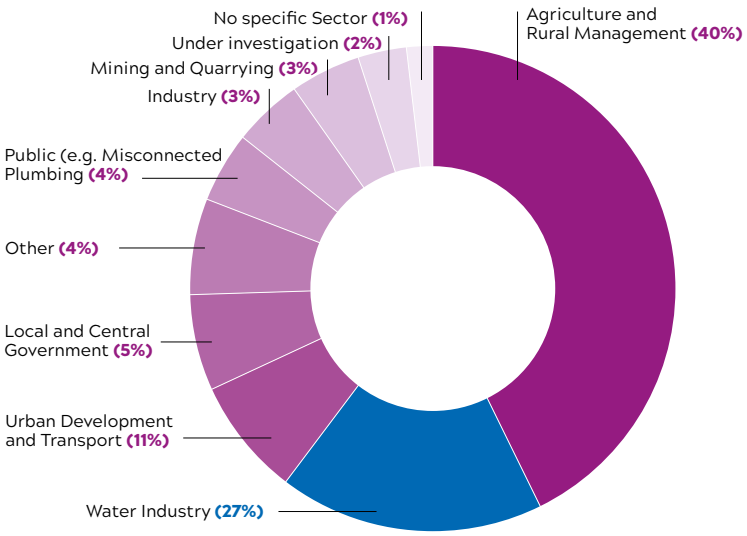
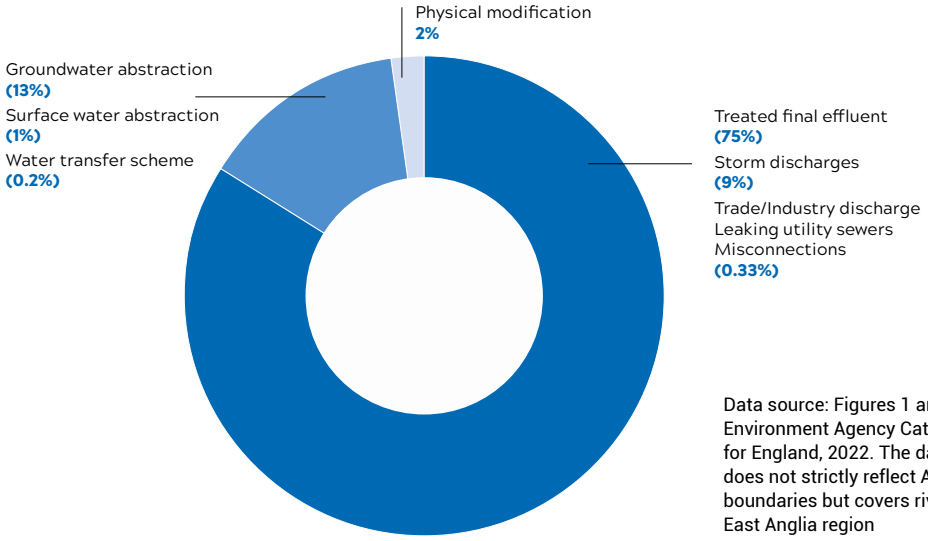


Figure 2: **Reasons related to water industry in East Anglia**



Data source: Figures 1 and 2, The Environment Agency Catchment Data for England, 2022. The data in figure 2 does not strictly reflect Anglian Water boundaries but covers rivers in the East Anglia region

3 anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/about-us/pr24/pr24-data-tables-anh-resubmission.xlsb

River health: 2023 highlights

£100 million invested in WINEP schemes in 2023/24*. Our WINEP is the largest in our industry – worth **£811 million**.

World's first ecological digital twin is live, with partners Microsoft and Avanade.

118
storm overflow permits were surrendered in 2023.

On track for one of industry's biggest reduction in abstraction by 2025.

3 new bathing waters designated in our region in 2023 with a further three in consideration.

Independent river health panel continues to hold us to account.

£7 million

of investment from our shareholders has enabled us to achieve over £9 million in match funding.

We're investing in 53 projects, with 44 primary beneficiaries.

More than 550km of river improved since 2020

with an expected 1,900km forecast for 2025, through a programme of work that includes over 100 catchment investigations, surface and groundwater quality restorations and phosphorus removal.

* This also includes investment that is contributing towards the delivery of 2024/25 obligations, which haven't yet been signed-off with our regulators.

The metrics on pages 6 and 7 are derived from the Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA), our ODI (Outcome Delivery Incentive) performance commitments, internal targets and commitments (including Get River Positive Commitments) to create an overarching dashboard of our environmental impact. Regionalised and localised impact has also been assessed based on the size of the programme and how widespread the activity is.

River health performance dashboard

Not on target | Moderately behind target | On or ahead of target

Performance measure	RAG status	Localised or regional impact?	Overview of performance
Serious pollutions (Category 1 and 2)	Not on target	Localised	We had 11 Category 2 pollution events in 2023. This is classified as Red in the Environment Agency's (EA) Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA)*. There is a lot of work ongoing to drive improvements, as outlined in our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan. Considering we also had 11 serious pollutions in 2022 (an exceptionally dry year), this indicates that our performance is stabilising.
Total pollution events (Category 1-3)	Not on target	Regional	We had 40 pollutions per 10,000km of sewer in 2023. This is compared to 33 in 2022. We had exceptionally high rainfall in our region over the past year, with repeated named storms impacting the ground's ability to absorb water. This excess water runs into already full-to-bursting rivers, ditches and storage, resulting in flooding and pollution events. It can also move into our sewer network and customers' private sewer pipes, through infiltration or inundation, when excess surface water has nowhere else to go.
Treatment works compliance	Moderately behind target	Regional	Our compliance was 98.4% in 2023*, compared to 98.6% in 2022. This is classified as Amber in the EPA, and continues to be a significant area of focus. In 2022 we had 12 failing works and in 2023 we had 13, with prolonged wet weather putting pressure on our systems at the end of the year.
Spills from storm overflows	Not on target	Regional	We had an average of 22 spills per overflow* in 2023 compared to 15 in 2022. This is, regrettably, more than our target of 20. However, to put this into context, the last time we had this high a level of rainfall in 2019, average spills were 35. Our shareholders have pledged £100 million of additional investment to provide further resilience in our network and reduce spills and pollutions.
Abstraction licence compliance	On or ahead of target	Regional	We achieved 100% compliance with our annual abstraction licence permits.
Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) delivery	Moderately behind target	Regional	This year we invested over £100 million on environmental enhancement through WINEP. Since 2020, we have delivered 1,533 schemes. Over half of our WINEP investments this AMP have been on improving Water Recycling. Against the revised profile agreed for 2023/24, we missed three schemes which, although physically delivered, did not pass MCerts inspections. These schemes have now been signed off.
Delivery of Get River Positive commitments	On or ahead of target	Regional	We have made significant progress with our Get River Positive commitments, investing over £7 million.
Get River Positive partnership funding	On or ahead of target	Localised	Match funding from our partners is expected to be over £9 million in total.

Performance measure	RAG status	Localised or regional impact?	Overview of performance
Operational carbon reduction		Regional	We missed our operational carbon reduction against our Ofwat target in 2023/24. As more large consumers have chosen to procure renewables directly, the proportion of renewables remaining in the 'residual' grid mix for standard grid electricity has declined. This increases the carbon emissions associated with all the grid electricity we consume that isn't directly from renewables. While emissions from standard grid electricity are outside of our control, we have increased our consumption from renewable energy from 25% to 28%.
Capital carbon reduction		Regional	We met our Ofwat target for capital carbon reduction in 2023/24, achieving a 64% reduction compared to a 2010 baseline.
Biodiversity net gain		Regional	We have voluntarily worked to the 10% Biodiversity net gain (BNG) target for several years. In 2023 we delivered 92% BNG, across capital and land management schemes.
SSSIs managed in favourable condition		Localised	99% of the 49 SSSIs (Sites of Scientific Special Interest) we manage were in favourable condition in 2023, compared to 40% of SSSIs nationally.
Satisfactory sewage sludge disposal		Regional	We achieved 99.43% of our targets for the satisfactory disposal of sewage sludge to agriculture and expect to be rated as Green in the EPA.
Bathing waters classified as Good or Excellent		Localised	92% of the bathing waters in our region were rated as either 'Excellent' or 'Good' in 2023. 30 of our bathing waters attained 'Excellent' status, compared to 32 in 2022. Four beaches moved from Excellent to Good. We have investigated the reasons behind declining water quality and have put plans in place to drive improvements where our operations may be having an impact.
Inland bathing water designations		Localised	Three of the four inland bathing water designations announced in 2023 are in our region (two at Rutland Water and the River Deben at Waldringfield). We actively supported all three applications and continue to work with local river groups and local authorities to support further applications.
Ultra-violet disinfection compliance		Localised	We use ultra-violet treatment at Water Recycling Centres that discharge near to sensitive waters, such as shellfisheries. In 2023, 10 sites were fully compliant, however, one failed to meet the daily UV dose requirement on one day. Another site failed to meet the permitted rolling annual UV requirement over t he year. We have implemented more robust systems and are improving our UV training and procedures.
Supply Demand Balance Index		Regional	The Supply Demand Balance Index is a key metric used by the Environment Agency to determine whether we have sufficient resources to maintain supplies. It compares the amount of water we would have available in a severe drought, net of actual outage, with demand and target headroom. Our overall Supply Demand Balance Index was 100% for 2023*.
Self-reporting of pollution incidents to the EA		Regional	Our self-reporting of pollution incidents to the EA improved to 89% from 73% in 2022. This was classified as Green in the EPA and is testament to our work to install more monitors and intelligence on our sewer network.

*Data subject to audit and/or final confirmation in the Environment Agency's EPA.

Get River Positive: Pledge 1

Ensure storm overflows, sewage treatment works and abstraction do not harm rivers

Our vision for 2050 is that storm overflows are no longer required. Through our Get River Positive programme, we've already made improvements to the way we operate and have significantly reduced the number of storm overflows in our network. Our target is to reduce spills from storm overflows to an average of 20 by 2025.

2023 was the sixth wettest year on record in England. Repeated named storms had a major impact on our region. Prolonged wet weather meant we had an average of 22 spills per overflow in 2023, compared to 15 in 2022, which was a particularly dry year.

The impact of the exceptionally wet winter in 2023 is demonstrated by 70% of all our spills occurring between October-December. To put this into context, the last time we had this high a level of rainfall in 2019, average spills were 35. This demonstrates that the action we're taking to make the network more resilient is having a positive impact.

Between 2022 and 2023, we surrendered 131 storm overflow permits, meaning we stopped operating these overflows on our network indefinitely. Surrendering overflows is key to reaching our long-term aspiration that, by 2050, storm overflows will no longer be required. Had we not surrendered these permits, our average number of spills per overflow would have been 20 this year, in line with our Get River Positive target. This is due to having fewer overflows to divide our total spill rate across.

Surrendering permits remains the right thing to do. Between 2020 and 2025, we will stop operating 157 storm overflows, which represents 10% of our total.

The weather extremes witnessed in recent years — extreme heat and rainfall — cannot be viewed in isolation, but as part of a broader pattern resulting from climate change. As the impact of climate change becomes more severe, we are preparing by installing more storm tanks and increasing the capacity of our Water Recycling Centres. Our shareholders recently agreed an additional £100 million of investment between 2024-2025 to tackle storm spills and to reduce pollution incidents.

We're planning to invest in several key areas. Firstly, we're proposing to add 8,000 more sewer monitors to bolster the existing 22,000 we've already planned. Secondly, we aim to enhance preventative maintenance in 100 sewer catchments. Finally, we are looking to develop a second digital model of the natural environment, for the River Wensum in Norfolk.

These initiatives link to our ongoing WINEP plan, which is set to continue until 2025. Through this plan, we're investing £10.7 million to minimise spills at critical sites.

Central to targeting improvements are Event Duration Monitors (EDMs), which monitor the duration of our spills. Our EDM programme completed at the end of 2023, meaning 100% of the storm overflows across our region are now monitored. Each of the 1,432 overflows across our network has a detailed improvement plan, outlined in our Storm Overflow Action Plan, which we submitted to the Government this year.

Our EDM data is supporting us with additional insight, to enable us to target and reduce spills. As we work towards eliminating the need for overflows, we have bolstered our commitment to improving transparency around our performance, by publishing our first, near real time map, showing indicative storm spills. Updated hourly, it will give our customers, stakeholders and those most passionate about their local environment visbility on how our network is operating, so they can make an informed decision about how they interact with their local river or bathing water. This builds on the coastal bathing alerts through the BeachAware system and feeds into the Surfers Against Sewage live map.

We know that our customers want us to move faster to consign storm overflows to history. And we're listening. If approved by Ofwat, our business plan from 2025 proposes almost £1 billion of investment to tackle storm spills directly – our largest investment ever.

Get River Positive: Pledge 1
Ensure storm overflows, sewage treatment works and abstraction do not harm rivers

Introducing Anglian Water's new Head of Spills: Gail Pickles

Gail Pickles has taken up a newly created 'Head of Spills' role in our Water Recycling team. She brings with her 25 years of industry experience. Gail joins us from Severn Trent Water, where she was River Protection Lead, with a focus on reducing spills. Gail tells us she wanted to join Anglian Water after working closely with our Get River Positive team, whose passion and ambition to do the right thing shone. In this new role, Gail's aspirations are to continue driving down spills through a tactical plan for the next 12-18 months, alongside pioneering a comprehensive 'Zero Escapes Strategy'.

The reasons for storm overflows

A storm overflow (sometimes known as a Combined Sewer Overflow, or CSO) acts as a safety valve, allowing excess water into rivers and the sea, to prevent sewers from overflowing during periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall or snow melt.

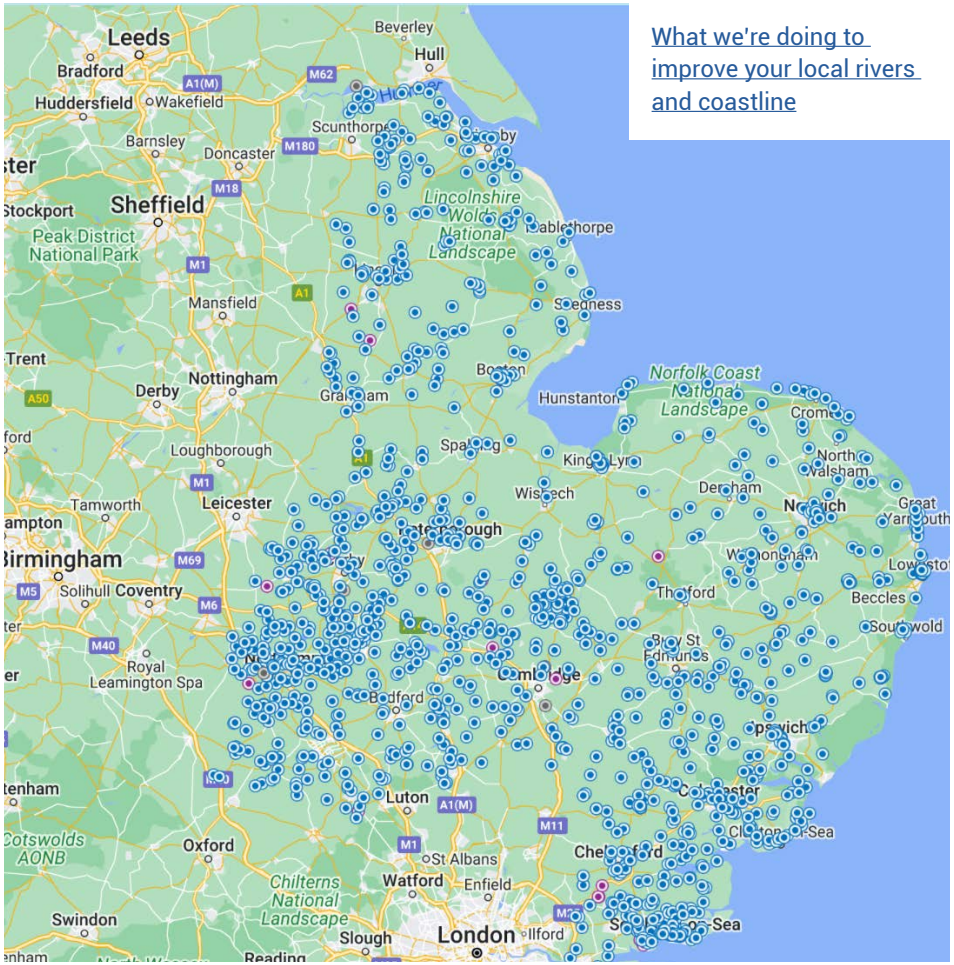
Storm overflows protect homes and businesses from flooding. Without them, this excess storm water could back up through toilets, drains and manholes. Because of the job that they do, we know the majority of what comes out of them is rainwater.

Sewers have not been built like this for decades. But each of our storm overflows is permitted to operate in this way, under certain conditions, by the Environment Agency (EA), as they provide an important function within the sewer system. Our spill data is shared with the EA as part of an annual data return.

- One third of our overflows are installed on our sewer network
- Another third are on our pumping stations
- The final third are on our Water Recycling Centres.

Although we are permitted to use storm overflows, we have a significant increase in investment and a focus on spills reduction in pursuit of our long-term ambition to eliminate all storm overflows.

What we're doing to improve your local rivers and coastline



Map shows where our storm overflow monitors are located

Reducing pollutions in 2023

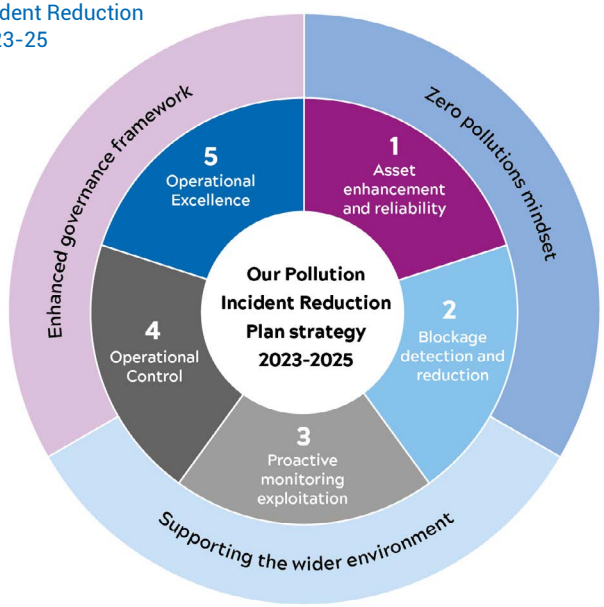
The impact of the prolonged wet weather had a direct impact on our performance this year. The UK's sewerage network was not designed to manage the volumes of water we witnessed. In 2023 alone, we doubled the operations of our pumping stations compared to usual levels to manage excess rainwater.

Saturated ground and high groundwater levels across our region have meant that increased volumes of excess rainwater have been carried into already full-to-bursting rivers, ditches and storage, resulting in widespread and prolonged internal and external flooding.

Despite our comprehensive response, this year, we reported an increased number of pollution events, and our performance with regards to serious pollutions remained static. While no spill to the environment is acceptable, our lead measures are showing improvements, demonstrating that the investment and action taken in line with our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) are paying off.

This is due to substantial resources and immense effort. Over the course of the past year, we have engaged in an extensive array of work, aimed at reducing the risk of pollution events.

Our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan strategy 2023-25



This work has included conducting thorough root-cause analysis, meticulously investigating failures and implementing robust risk mitigation measures. Additionally, we have executed our sewer monitoring and routine cleansing program, while also making enhancements to our water treatment centres.

Understanding and improving performance across the 76,000km of sewer pipes we operate in our region is underpinned by a substantial data and analytics programme. Our Network Risk Tool enables us to visualise and manage high-risk areas in our sewer network. This informs our Dynamic Sewer Visualisation (DSV) programme, where we are installing monitors across our highest risk sewers. We now have approximately 22,000 monitors installed across 11,000km and are aiming to install a further 8,000 monitors.

Working with the food industry and customers, to 'Keep it Clear'

We clear over 40,000 blockages every single year, caused by wrongly flushed items, as well as a build-up of fats, oils and greases. This equates to one blockage every five minutes – of which 80% are avoidable.

To prevent blockages at source, we work with environmental compliance experts, ECAS, to identify Food Serving Establishments (FSEs) that can cause blockages by disposing of cooking fats down the drain. This year, to date, an estimated 1,054 tonnes of fat, oil and grease were diverted from sewers, as a result of our outreach work. Alongside our work with FSEs, 'Keep it Clear' is our campaign to educate the public more broadly about responsibly disposing of cooking fats, sanitary items and wipes.

Our DSV monitors are also helping us to detect blockages forming, so we can clear them before they cause an impact. With 40% of our pollutions caused by sewer blockages, we are already seeing the benefits. Analysis of our 2023 total pollution data shows blockages have reduced 10% on 2022, marking our best performance this AMP to date. This is indicative of the start of a high-level trend towards sustainable pollution reduction.

Harnessing data on our assets means we now have a more comprehensive understanding of our pollutions performance across our network than ever before. Although we know we have much more to do we are seeing improvements.

Get River Positive: Pledge 1
Ensure storm overflows, sewage treatment works and abstraction do not harm rivers

Sustainable water management: reducing abstraction

Our Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) sets out how we will manage water supply and demand in our region, looking ahead 25 years.

Reducing abstraction protects the environment: it means we can leave more water in environmentally sensitive habitats such as chalk streams, especially as demand for water grows. We have made one of the industry's biggest commitments to reducing abstraction. We reduced abstraction by 80 million litres per day between 2015-2020. By 2025, we are committed to capping abstraction to historic peak levels, and going even further by 2030, reducing levels by an additional 174 megalitres a day.

Half of the water we abstract is from ground water sources with the other half coming from rivers, often via storage reservoirs, such as Grafham Water and Rutland Water.

In 2023, our overall abstraction increased slightly, as we looked to refill our reservoirs. These were low as a result of the 2022 drought – the driest summer on record since 1995, with some of the highest daily temperatures since records began. The wet weather experienced during 2023 enabled us to abstract slightly more, to top up supplies without causing environmental harm.

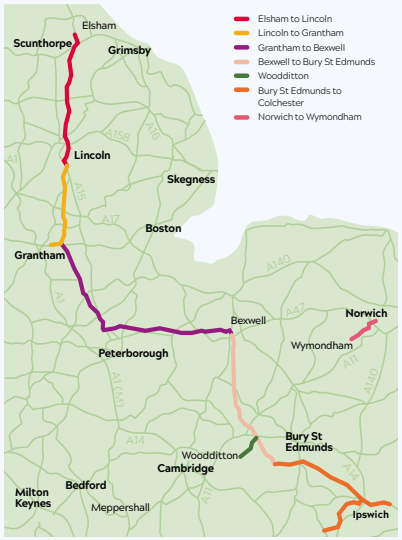
Our river support schemes help to maintain flow during drier periods. During the summer, we supported local rivers with a total of 629 million litres of water.

This year, we were able to stop abstracting at a site in the Norfolk Broads, following the earlier than expected completion of our Norwich supply pipeline into the Broads. Since we stopped abstracting at this site, water levels have increased, allowing more alkaline, nutrient-rich water into the Fen.

Being able to cap abstraction licenses, in the face of hotter drier summers and an increasing population, is testament to our twin-track approach to managing supply and demand.

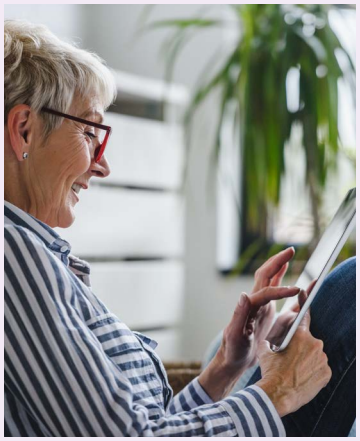
Furthermore, we are investing in water storage, with plans for two new reservoirs – one in Lincolnshire, and another in Cambridgeshire.

Alongside the introduction of new infrastructure, decades of investment has been pivotal in maintaining our consistent track record of minimal leakage from our own pipework, and in reducing per capita consumption. This year, we saw our lowest-ever recorded three-year rolling average for leakage.

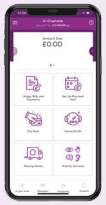


To increase resilience, we are creating a new Strategic Interconnecting Grid for the East of England. The grid will consist of a network of hundreds of kilometres of interconnecting pipelines to move water more freely around the region. As one of Europe's biggest environmental projects, the grid will allow 265 million litres of water to be moved from 'wetter' to 'drier' areas of the region, helping to combat the risk of shortages, boosting resilience and securing water supplies.

Route of our interconnecting drinking water grid



We are encouraging our customers to be wiser with their water. Through our roll-out of smart meters, behavioural change campaigns and our associated 'My Account' app, we are supporting our customers to better understand and reduce their usage and spot leaks too.



This year, we fitted 262,621 smart meters, bringing the total number of installations since 2020 to 806,307. We plan to install over 1 million by 2025 and 2 million by 2030.

Get River Positive: Pledge 2

Create more opportunities for everyone to enjoy our region's rivers.

Attractive beaches and clean bathing waters are important drivers of tourism, particularly on the coast. Our ambition is for the majority of our customers to live within one hour of a designated bathing water site.

There are currently 51 designated bathing sites across the Anglian Water region: 48 coastal sites, one estuarine site and two inland sites.

In 2023, 92% of bathing waters in our region were classed as Excellent or Good. Two were classed as Poor. Investigations carried out to date suggest water quality issues at these bathing waters are linked to diffuse pollution sources rather than any of our operations. Further investigations into risks to bathing water quality, including from Anglian Water assets, are planned from 2025 onwards across the region.

17 bathing water sites have Blue Flags and a further 20 have Seaside Awards. The high quality of these bathing waters, along with the range of facilities on offer at these coastal locations, support local tourism.

The 2023 classifications include three new inland bathing waters in the Anglian Water region: two at sites on Rutland Water – Sykes Lane and Whitwell Creek – as well as the River Deben Estuary.

Our two bathing sites at Rutland Water received official designation as bathing waters from Defra. And, the Excellent quality status at Sykes Lane means we have been awarded a blue flag and a seaside award through Keep Britain Tidy.

Three further areas – the River Stour in Suffolk, the River Cam in Cambridgeshire and Manningtree Beach in Essex – also received official designation as bathing water sites in early 2024. To support these applications, we provided professional sampling, on behalf of the local community river groups, along the River Cam and at two sites along the River Stour (Sudbury and Manningtree). We are also working closely with communities along the River Deben, sampling a further stretch of the river in Woodbridge.

This builds on the many Good and Excellent quality coastal bathing waters, already designated in our region.

Our bathing water team safeguards the quality of our region's bathing waters through targeted investigations and investment. They engage with stakeholders, in particular, local authorities and the Environment Agency, to identify and progress opportunities to improve bathing water classifications.

Anglian Water continues to explore how to maximise the benefits of reservoirs for local people, through the provision of outdoor amenities.

2023 Bathing Water Classifications:	
30	Excellent
17	Good
2	Sufficient
2	Poor

Get River Positive: Pledge 3

Support others to improve and care for rivers.

We work with a range of organisations, galvanising collective action to improve and care for rivers. In 2023, we invested in 53 projects, working in partnership with others.

Working with the region's farming industry

The East of England's agricultural economic contribution is roughly twice the national average.

We work closely with farmers and landowners to not only tackle the risk of diffuse and point source pollution, but also to support innovative practices that enhance sustainability.

Over the past year our Farm Innovation Grant has:

Helped 66 farmers deliver projects, with a value of £1.3 million, on soil health, nutrient management, pesticide management and precision technology.

Helped 100 farmers plant over 1,000 hectares of cover crops to protect soils and retain nutrients.

Provided 243 days of training to 32 farm businesses, covering over 57,000 hectares.

Furthermore, we are funding 11 farm clusters across our region. These clusters bring together farmers and landowners and encourage collaborative work, to deliver greater benefits for soil, water and wildlife.

"Effective cover crop management is key to our soil health programme, and Anglian Water's help through the Farm Innovation Grant has been vital to pursue our plans. It has enabled us to invest in equipment and techniques, which would otherwise have been beyond our reach, significantly accelerating our ability to improve our soils, capture nutrients, combat erosion, build resilience into our system and improve water quality on the farm."

Henry Reynolds
Managing Director
Reynolds Precision

CropTec 2023

We sponsored the 2023 CropTec conference in Warwickshire, an event that brought together the region's farmers and agronomists, to discuss issues faced by both agriculture and the water industry. Topics covered everything from abstraction to pesticides.

Pitsford Water Friendly Farming

Date started: 2022

Key partners: Freshwater Habitats Trust, the Environment Agency and the farming community of the Scaldwell and Walgrave catchments.

Pitsford Water Friendly Farming is demonstrating the art of the possible for the farming industry, to support freshwater biodiversity, landscape-scale water quality and reductions in flood peaks through natural flood management.

So far, we've supported the creation of 72 landscape mitigation measures, embarked on landscape-scale monitoring of freshwater plants, invertebrates, fish/amphibians and water quality and engaged with landowners to understand the impact of features within their farm businesses.

Catchment Systems Thinking Co-operative (CaSTCo) project

Date started: 2022

Key partners: The Rivers Trust, Ofwat, CaBA partners, the Environment Agency, Freshwater Habitats Trust.

The Ofwat Innovation Fund Catchment Systems Thinking Co-operative (CaSTCo) project aims to co-create a national framework, focused on citizen science and low-cost monitoring, to generate evidence on catchment health.

The project's aims have been refocused to include; creating monitoring and data collection systems to inform decision making; producing guidelines on volunteer recruitment; stakeholder engagement and improving cross-sector collaboration to drive environmental change. The outputs from the test catchments of the programme will be used to help develop the business case for the future blueprint of CaSTCo and to show the power of using this approach.

Over the past year the project has made strides with water quality monitoring and testing at key sites. This has involved baseline monitoring of the health of the headwaters of the Broadland Rivers Management catchment, the River Lark and the Wensum.

The project has also created a bespoke data platform to gather and visualise citizen-scientist-collected data, which can then be used to view trends and gaps in monitoring and inform environmental decisions.

With CaSTCo funding, we have recruited a PhD student who is working to understand the efficacy of treatment wetlands, with the aim of these being introduced at further sites. Another element of CaSTCo has involved working with the Freshwater Habitat Trust, to look at how the current regulatory framework for smaller waters and small Water Recycling Centres could be developed to enhance outcomes.

The CaSTCo project will enable us to collaborate with citizen scientists across the region, helping us measure impacts on wellbeing and links to environmental and behavioural change.

The Norfolk Rivers Trust restoration project on the River Stiffkey

Date started: 2022

Key partners: Norfolk Rivers Trust.

We have supported the Norfolk Rivers Trust's restoration project on the River Stiffkey, to accelerate the Trust's plan to restore the river from source to sea. Matched by funding from other investors, our contribution is helping the Trust re-meander the river, reduce pollution from agriculture and install wildlife-rich, low-carbon treatment wetlands next to our water recycling centres in the catchment.

In 2023, we invested £47,000 into the Holkham Restoration project, located on the River Stiffkey. The aim is to correct historic modifications made to straighten the flow of the River and restore the original meander of the channel. Importantly, the re-meandering will reconnect the river to the floodplain, reducing sediment build-up and facilitating natural flood management, which in turn will support biodiversity. So far, we have supported the Norfolk Rivers Trust to restore 2km of channel and install gravel along the riverbed that cuts through a floodplain. Going forward, the Trust will work with Holkham Estate to install three bridges that allow tenants to access new islands that will be created for cattle-grazing access.

In partnership with Microsoft and Avanade we have created the world's first ecological digital twin on the River Stiffkey. The digital twin models the range of factors that contribute to the river's health, improving understanding of the critical catchment pressures, which will enable us to drive improvements. Our experience on the digital twin on the Stiffkey is feeding into a £5.5 million Ofwat-funded project, River Deep Mountain AI. This work is influencing how we move digital-twin thinking to other waterways, such as the River Wensum.

The River Deben

Date started: 2022

Key partners: Essex & Suffolk Rivers Trust, Upper Deben Farm Cluster, River Deben Association, Environment Agency, East Suffolk Catchment Partnership.

We are collaborating with environmental organisations, communities and citizen scientists to achieve broader environmental outcomes on the River Deben.

In 2023, we supported the 'Save the Deben' campaign with their successful application for a designated bathing water on the river Deben at Waldringfield. The quality of the bathing water is being monitored by the Environment Agency.

We also supported the development of the Upper Deben Farm Cluster, funding the group to help them grow. Within the funded period, the Cluster will focus on baselining and mapping existing resources, habitats and features, to provide a view on the current ecological health of the Deben.

Lastly, we are supporting the Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust, and various other stakeholders, on their 'Recovering the Deben: Source to Sea' initiative, which aims to transform the Deben ecosystem by 2030. The River Deben and its estuary are together designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). However, only 11% of the river length is in a healthy ecological condition, with the estuary bearing the brunt of pollution and saltmarsh depletion. Recognised by Defra as pivotal, the project, which we are proud to be part of, has resulted in a Catchment Action Plan.

East Mercia Rivers Trust (EMRT)

Date started: 2023

Key partners: East Mercia Rivers Trust (EMRT), Environment Agency, Wild Trout Trust.

We are supporting the East Mercia Rivers Trust (EMRT) to restore and enhance the Witham and Welland river catchments in Lincolnshire.

The Witham catchment is home to globally-rare chalk streams and limestone rivers, including the Upper Witham and the Limestone Becks. Historic changes – including dredging and straightening, along with abstraction and pollution – have significantly degraded the Becks' habitat. However, the 'Bringing the Limestone Becks Back to Life' partnership is successfully implementing large-scale restoration.

We are also contributing to delivering a major wetland and river restoration on the Buckminster Estate. The funding is vital for monitoring the project impacts, such as water quality and post-remediation habitat works. It will also fund a project officer, who will organise community volunteering and outreach events with an active Defra farm cluster group. The programme of work is critical groundwork required to restore the Upper Witham sub-catchment at a landscape level.

On the Welland, we are working closely with the Environment Agency and EMRT to consider Natural Flood Management measures that, due to historical straightening of the river, are increasing the risk of flooding in Market Harborough and Stamford.

Furthermore, the EMRT will establish the UK's first permanent Rivers Academy. The Rivers Academy is designed to be a unique learning facility, encouraging people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to understand more about the river environment.

Rachel Butler, Executive Director, East Mercia Rivers Trust, said: "With no river classed as healthy and our region officially classed as 'water stressed', we welcome the Get River Positive initiative by Anglian Water. It has come at a time when traditional government resources are overstretched. Partnerships like this are crucial to address both the climate and nature emergencies."

Citizen Science

Date started: 2023

Key partners: River groups across the Anglian Water region

Our Citizen Science pilot project – launched in 2023 – supports communities in understanding and safeguarding watercourses in our region. We have provided community groups with water-surface testing kits from Hach, alongside training and guidance. These kits measure key indicators such as pH, temperature, ammonia, nitrates, free and total chlorine, dissolved oxygen, and phosphates. By supporting communities to self-monitor, safely and accurately, we aim to learn more together about the health of rivers in our region.
We have so far convened two Citizen Science conferences bringing together river groups to share findings, best practice and actions.

Future Fens: Integrated Adaptation (FF:IA)

Date started: 2021

Key partners: Environment Agency, Water Resources East, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

The Fens were drained centuries ago, resulting in a flat, dry, low-lying area. Half of the UK's most fertile agricultural land is in the Fens, providing a fifth of the nation's crops and a third of its vegetables. They are on the frontline of extreme weather patterns; rising sea levels put them at growing risk of severe tidal flooding and they are also the driest part of the country, with water shortages a real and increasing risk, particularly during the summer months[4].

In 2021, a multi-sector taskforce came together to create Future Fens: Integrated Adaptation (FF:IA)[5]. The aspiration is for the Fens to be an exemplar for landscape-scale integrated water management and resilience planning.

Over the past year, the FF:IA partnership has conducted workshops involving approximately 70 organisations, representing various interests in the Fens region. The aim was to gain insights into the challenges and opportunities concerning climate change and water management.

Alongside these workshops, the FF:IA outlined ten strategic outcomes, focusing on three main plans in the region: WRE's Regional Water Resources Plan for Eastern England, Fens 2100+, and the corporate strategy of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined authority.

This engagement increased FF:IA's visibility across the region among partners and external stakeholders. As a result, the taskforce secured an additional £1.3 million in funding to support Phase 2 of FF:IA. This funding has facilitated the development of three large-scale partner projects, including climate change risk assessment, a 3D visualisation expo and the Fens Transition Lab.

These initiatives aim to build an evidence base for investment, fostering collaborative partnerships and projects in blue-green infrastructure to accelerate sustainable development.

Collaborating to educate on the Floodplain Meadows Partnership

Date started: 2024

Key partners: Open University, Natural England, Environment Agency, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts, Field Studies Council, National Trust, People Need Nature and Natural Resources Wales.

In 2024, we announced our partnership with the Open University on the Floodplain Meadows Partnership, to address the urgent need to maintain and promote Britain's now-rare floodplain meadows. Alongside carbon sequestration, floodplain meadows offer a myriad of ecosystem-services, including nutrient regulation, water-quality improvement, biodiversity conservation and the preservation of social history.

What are floodplains? A floodplain is the area of flat land that surrounds a river. This land is inundated when a river floods due to high rainfall. The flooding of the river is a natural process, which delivers key nutrients and minerals to soils. It's also a method of river evolution.

4 wre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Future-Fens-Integrated-Adaptation-manifesto_November-2021.pdf

5 https://awinnovationhub.co.uk/project/future-fens-integrated-adaptation-ffia/

Get River Positive: Pledge 4

Enhance our rivers and create new habitats, so wildlife can thrive.

Date started: 2022

Key partners: Spains Hall Estate, Environment Agency, the Anglian Eastern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), Essex County Council, Essex and Suffolk Water, Rushden Lakes.

Reintroducing beavers as natural flood defences

Archie Ruggles-Brise is championing a nature-first approach on Spains Hall Estate, north Essex. He masterminded a beaver and natural flood management project through the reintroduction of Eurasian beavers into a fenced enclosure in 2019, to combat village flooding – the first project of its type in East Anglia.

Since then, the beavers have used their natural engineering skills to transform woodland into thriving wetland.
The dams, which the beavers have created from locally felled trees, sticks, stones and mud, have played a crucial role in reducing flood risk in the area, by slowing down the river flow and diverting it through new channels and wetlands.

The beavers have meant that we don't need to invest in grey, carbon-intensive

infrastructure, which clearly supports the case for nature-based solutions.

We continue to look for further opportunities to support the reintroduction of beavers. In 2022, we, alongside the Environment Agency, the Anglian Eastern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), Essex County Council and Essex and Suffolk Water, supported the reintroduction of a second Eurasian beaver family, to help protect an additional stretch of Finchingfield Brook.

We are supporting two additional beaver projects, one at Rushden Lakes in Northamptonshire and another in Suffolk.

(Left to right): Dr Robin Price, Director of Quality and Environment, Jonathan Glerum, Anglian Water Head of Sustainable Growth, Dr Ros Rivaz, the new Chair of the Anglian Water Board, Archie Ruggles-Brise, and John Barry, Anglian Water Board member on a visit to Archie at Spains Hall, to explore the role of nature in reducing the risk of flooding for communities.

In January 2024, Storm Henk brought damaging winds and heavy rain to southern and central parts of England. Archie's drone footage shows the benefits of the beaver dams in action. He said: "The two pairs of beavers were released into two 50-acre areas in March 2023, so it's still early days, but there are beaver dams. The water in the stream is being forced out onto the floodplain earlier, and for longer than it would without them. This is one of the many ways we are pushing boundaries of what can be done on private land."

Get River Positive: Pledge 4
Enhance our rivers and create new habitats, so wildlife can thrive.

The River Lark Catchment Partnership

Date started: 2021

Key partners: Norfolk Rivers Trust, the River Lark Catchment Partnership (RLCP), Environment Agency.

We are supporting the River Lark Catchment Partnership's 'River Lark Restoration Plan', for the restoration of the precious chalk stream, alongside development of sustainable community-based river management. The River Lark is one of 12 English chalk streams chosen to pioneer a unique national plan for chalk stream restoration. Over time, the Lark has become degraded and can no longer support the rich and varied wildlife it was previously home to. Our work on the Lark seeks to demonstrate how more can be achieved through effective partnership working. This will inform and support Anglian Water's approach to partnership creation and the delivery of such approaches through Advanced WINEP from 2025 onwards.

What are chalk streams? Chalk streams are a rare spring-fed rivers, found in England and parts of France and Denmark. Nearly all the world's chalk streams are in England and they represent one of the UK's most important contributions to global biodiversity.[6]

Norfolk Water Fund

Date started: 2020

Key partners: Norfolk County Council, The Nature Conservancy and Water Resources East.

In February 2021, Anglian Water formed a partnership with Water Resources East, Norfolk County Council, and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), to deliver a Norfolk Water Strategy Programme (NWSP). Norfolk is experiencing growing pressures on its water resources. Flooding is becoming more frequent and businesses are feeling the impact of water scarcity. The ecological quality of catchments is also threatened by impacts such as nutrient emissions and habitat destruction.

The NWSP aims to tackle these challenges through investing in nature-based solutions and restoring more natural processes within key catchments.

NWSP, co-funded through Get River Positive, sees us work with a variety of organisations to test and implement nature-based solutions to improve water security in the county.

This work has developed a business case for a Norfolk Water Fund, an investable, long-term proposition for private and public financing with the relevant governance and operational management. Water Funds are a well-established, international model for facilitating collective action to address water-security challenges through nature-based solutions.

Norfolk is one of two European pilots selected for Water Funds by The Nature Conservancy, adding to their global portfolio of Water Fund projects. The business case shows that for every £1 invested, nature-based solutions could generate £6.70 in benefits, including improved water resources, enhanced habitats for wildlife and support for housing growth, while preserving the environment. The fund will focus on implementing projects to reduce water runoff, through interventions like leaky ponds, wetlands and soil management measures. This initiative aims to position Norfolk as a global leader in collaborative water management.

6 catchmentbasedapproach.org/learn/chalk-stream-strategy-3/

Get River Positive: Pledge 5

Be open and transparent about our performance and our plans.

In 2023, our independent river health panel, made up of a broad spectrum of academic and river experts, was established. We have regular meetings with this expert panel, who constructively challenge us on our Get River Positive actions and outcomes.

Our panel is chaired by Dr Alan Woods, who has a background in land and water policy. Alan is the former Chair of the Environment Agency's Anglian Region Environment Protection Advisory Committee, the Welland Valley Partnership's Resource Protection Group and Secretary of the Cam Valley Forum.

This report is one way we are facilitating transparency on river quality, alongside our live, real-time storm overflows map.

In addition, Anglian Water's Independent Challenge Group (ICG) is a group of independent experts and regulators, with an independent Chair, Craig Bennett, Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts. The ICG challenges whether we are delivering on customer priorities. Over the past year, the ICG has provided scrutiny on the quality of our engagement with customers and our wider communities and on whether our actions reflect their priorities. In the preparation of our 2025-30 business plan, we carried out around 35,000 in-depth engagements with our household customers and over 2,500 engagements with our non-household customers. When we asked customers about their priorities, safe, clean drinking water was top, followed by drinking water quality, long-term supply planning and river water quality.

The Anglian Water team visit Anna Firth MP at the Southend Water Summit

Engagement with political stakeholders

In 2023, we celebrated one year of Get River Positive at an event in Westminster. The Parliamentary Sponsor for this event was Philip Dunne MP, Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee. Alongside Severn Trent, we hosted an event to bring MPs and policymakers up to date on how we are working in their constituencies and on future ambitions. Conversations during the event have helped to inform subsequent activities.

In addition, over the past year, we engaged face to face with over 1,110 political stakeholders. Many of these meetings focused on our work to reduce storm overflows, where we welcomed the then Defra Secretary of State, Dr Thérèse Coffey, on site visits to Martlesham creek, Langham Wetlands and Cliff Quay Water Recycling Works.

Southend Water Summits

Convened in 2023 by Anna Firth, MP for Southend West, the Southend Water Summits continued to address bathing water quality and surface water management. To date, we have attended four Southend Water Summits to address the concerns of local residents, swimming groups, sailing clubs, Southend Against Sewage, local businesses and local councillors. The summits give communities a chance to discuss their concerns, as well as providing us with the platform to share our plans for environmental improvement throughout the city and address any misinformation. These summits have continued into 2024.

Looking forward to 2024

Get River Positive is accelerating the work we have always wanted to do. It demonstrates how our Purpose underpins the work we are doing now to build a better future for the environment and communities.

In 2022, our focus was on assessing where we could have the biggest impact. In 2023, we completed the allocation of funding, generating over £9 million in match funding, all directed towards collaborative projects with a commitment to deliver long-term benefits for the region's rivers.

We are excited to see Get River Positive partnership projects delivering environmental benefits at landowner catchment and landscape-scale across the region. These ongoing projects and partnerships are proving the benefits of nature-based solutions and provide a blueprint for our A-WINEP.

In 2023, we submitted our business plan proposal for AMP8 (2025-2030) to Ofwat. With our enhancement programme doubling, and as large-scale asset investment ramps up across our sector, we require a step change in our approach.

To deliver the environmental outcomes we need in the context of a changing climate, a growing population and raised ambitions for environmental protection and enhancement, we are seeking new ways of working to really maximise the opportunity for wider benefits from this work, for example, through our A-WINEP and associated 'Partnership Centre for Excellence'.

To this end, we continue to seek opportunities to work with like-minded partners to deliver more nature-based solutions. In 2024, Binnies will become a full partner in our 15-year strong @one Alliance. We are working with them, alongside other agencies, to find new ways of working together to improve the health of our region's rivers.

Furthermore, the Sustainable Solutions for Water and Nature (S-SWAN) is a partnership of organisations that aims to find sustainable solutions for water and nature. It advocates a catchment-based, holistic approach to managing our water courses, with an emphasis on nature-based and low-carbon solutions. We are working with S-SWAN to promote an outcomes-based approach to environmental regulation and a more joined-up, more accountable regulatory model, with national targets tailored to local circumstances.

Over the next year, we have a large programme of work, including fulfilling our WINEP obligations for AMP7 through a programme of almost 500 obligations, with a strong emphasis on sustainable abstraction and reducing nutrient-loading.

There is a lot to do in this space. However, with our collective efforts across the business and with support from our partners, we will start to see real change.

We are hugely grateful to the Get River Positive community, which varies from partners, to landowners to community groups, for their dedicated work. Together, we are making tangible progress on improving river health.

7 stormwatershepherds.org.uk/2024/02/02/bringing-the-topic-of-highway-pollution-out-into-the-open/

Glossary

This report provides an annual progress update on Get River Positive and what we achieved in 2023. There are a range of metrics we use to measure the health of our waterways and several environmental programmes we deliver that contribute. We provide an update against the holistic metrics we use to measure our impact. The report also provides a more-detailed update of progress against each of our five pledges. Our previous annual update on river water quality can be found here.

Glossary

Asset Management Plan (AMP): AMP periods are five years in duration. The current period (2020-25) is known as AMP7 because it is the seventh price review period since privatisation of the water industry in 1989. AMP8 will cover the period 2025-2030.

Abstraction: The amount of water we take (abstract) from the environment.

Catchment-Based Approach (CaBA): A community-led approach that engages people and groups from across society, to help improve our water environments.

Environment Agency (EA): The Environment Agency is responsible for protecting and improving the water environment, which includes rivers, ground waters, and coastal waters. The EA regulates both quality and quantity of water we take from, and return to, the environment.

Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA): Introduced by the Environment Agency in 2011 as a non-statutory tool for comparing performance between water and sewerage companies operating in England.

Event Duration Monitor (EDM): Monitors that we install on our storm overflows to capture the number of times and duration of time our overflows spill to the environment.

Get River Positive (GRP): Our programme to protect and revitalise rivers by 2030.

Landscape-scale: Land management approaches that involve working in collaboration at a large scale (often around a catchment) and considers ways to deliver greater benefits than managing smaller sites in isolation.

Nature-based solutions (NBS): Sustainable management schemes that aim to replicate or restore natural functions to address environmental and social challenges. An example is a treatment wetland, which uses plants to naturally filter water before it re-enters the environment.

Outcome Delivery Incentive (ODI): We are assessed by Ofwat against 40 different measures, known as ODIs.

Price Review 2024 (PR24): The Price Review process determines how much revenue companies can earn from their customers over a set period. Water companies put forward a business plan to Ofwat, which the regulator assesses to make a determination on the allowance.

Rivers Not Achieving Good Status (RNAGs): A metric used by the Environment Agency for assessing the health of the water environment.

Place-based approach: A place-based approach means understanding the outcomes most important to local communities in a specific area, and designing solutions to benefit that area.

Storm overflow (SO): Sometimes referred to as Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs), storm overflows are relief valves built into the combined sewer systems, to allow excess water into rivers, lakes, or the sea when rainfall exceeds capacity. This permitted discharge protects properties from flooding and prevents sewage backing up into streets and homes during heavy storms.

River health: An umbrella term, which encompasses key elements of a healthy river, such as ecological and chemical water quality, biological qualities in supporting habitats and a thriving ecosystem, physical qualities such as form, shape and flow and its social function.

Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP): The programme of actions water companies need to take to meet statutory environmental obligations, non-statutory environmental requirements or delivery against a water company's statutory functions.

A-WINEP: Our Advanced Water Industry National Environment Programme will see us develop new ways of collaborating with environmental organisations, communities and citizen scientists, to drive improvements at a catchment and landscape scale.

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