Fenland District Council

UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS

Agenda Item No. 5

REF	Date Requested	Question	Target Date
COMPLETED ACTONS			
	02/12/24	Anglian Water Questions: **Cllr Hicks** asked about leakage repair timescales, and I couldn't remember the exact example he raised. I've checked our system and can see a recently completed leak repair on Fleetwood Close, March, but were there any other specific examples / locations that I can look into? **Cllr Carney** raised a concern about Highways liaison, so again, would you be able to provide some specific examples so our local operations team can investigate. 1. As water companies represent part of the national infrastructure, they are vulnerable to cyber-attacks. What is Anglian Water doing to safeguard its IT networks? Is key data managed on up-to-date software, for instance? How often do IT upgrades take place? **Response:** Cyber Security is one of our "principle risks" – this means that it is actively overseen and scrutinised by both executive and non-executive directors and forms a regular part of our audit programme. Anglian Water forms part of what the Government calls the "Critical National Infrastructure" as such we receive direct support from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to understand the factors that affect our cyber security and to assist us in operating in ways that maximise our ability to protect our services, assets, data and of course people. The government through NCSC and our regulators (specifically the Drinking Water Inspectorate) publish requirements that we must adhere to that describe a framework for how cyber security should operate. We work with them to operate within that framework and to drive continual improvement. We have an in-house team of experienced and well qualified professionals whose sole purpose is cyber security. They use internationally recognised best practices to understand our current level of cyber security maturity and to continually work to improve it through the delivery of our own Cyber Security strategy. These activities focus on Governance, Identification, Detection, Protection, Respond and Recovery to ensure that we consider all aspects of security. All our IT services are designed to be "Secure by design" and through the life of our technology services we actively monitor systems for potential vulnerabilities (weaknesses that attackers can exploit) using specialist tools and for	12/12/24

our most critical services we utilise “ethical hackers” to test the integrity of our security controls.
In addition, all Anglian Water staff receive mandatory training on Cyber Security.

2. In the Ofwat 2023/24 report, the overall categorisation for Anglian Water was 'lagging behind.' Even the widely criticised Thames Water was considered 'average.' I find it shocking that AW were one of only three water companies to be 'lagging behind'. What are AW doing about this? Report source: https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/WCPR-23-24.pdf

Response:

We know that our performance needs to improve in some areas, and with the arrival of our new CEO this summer, we are focused on a dedicated programme to accelerate these results.
The Ofwat report looks at performance from 2023/24. Since then, the measures we've put in place mean that performance is already improving, but we acknowledge we still need to go further.
Direct comparison across the industry is difficult because Performance Commitment Levels (PCL) differ between companies. Underperformance against a PCL doesn’t necessarily indicate absolute underperformance at an industry level. It does not necessarily mean performance is deteriorating either.
For example, despite leading the industry in tackling leakage, because we missed our stretching target we are classed as 'lagging' and this contributes to our underperformance payments.
For 2023/24, the balance of our performance across all these areas meant that we incur an underperformance payment of £38.1 million, which will ultimately be reflected in customer bills for 2025/26.
We are working with Ofwat to ensure the measures for the next five years are appropriate and drive the right outcomes for customers, stakeholders and the environment.
We have just submitted to Ofwat a Service Commitment Plan which provides context into why our performance fell short and our plans to address challenges. The plan explains each area of performance, the root causes of any underperformance, the actions we’re taking and where we have made improvements. The plan is available on our website - https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/corporate/strategies-and-plans/service-commitment-plan/

3. Also, in the report, Ofwat states that AW 'show concerning underperformance on WRMP delivery for a third consecutive year' (p.17) and a failure to 'meet the performance commitment level for four consecutive years' (p.25). Why has there been underperformance for three consecutive years with regard to the company's Water Resources Management Plan and for four years in regard to pollution incidents commitment levels?

Response:

The Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP)
The WRMP has been affected by factors, including the Covid pandemic, which increased per capita consumption, the severe weather in 2022, which increased leakage, and the war in Ukraine, which caused supply chain issues and a resulting delay in the delivery of our strategic pipeline. These issues have been addressed in our WRMP24, draft Business Plan and subsequent updates.
The southern section of our strategic pipeline (including the section through the Fenland district) will be completed by November 2027, at which point our supply demand balance will be sufficient to enable us to reduce abstraction from sensitive groundwaters, as well as ensuring our supply system is resilient to a 1 in 200-year drought. We continue to work on

reducing demand with the rollout of smart meters, helping customers avoid unintended consumption related to leaks in their properties, as well as by reducing leakage on our network, which is already at industry leading levels.

Pollutions

We acknowledge that our pollutions performance has not been to the standard we or customers expect.

In 2023/24 alone, we invested nearly half a billion pounds in reducing pollution and spills, utilising new technologies and instilling new ways of working to lay the foundations to improve our performance.

We are disappointed and frustrated that our performance isn't moving fast enough. But we are realistic that there are no quick fixes. While we are moving forward with urgency and putting significant amounts of resources behind turning around our performance, we know the time it will take to yield results.

In 2023/24, we had the wettest winter on record. As a result, in 2023, we processed 25% more flow into our Water Recycling Centres, and our pumping stations were operating for double the amount of time, in comparison to 2022.

Despite operating to maximum capacity and as designed, our sewerage network and pumping stations were inundated by hydraulic overload - where there is more water than there are places to store it - placing upward pressure on pollution and flooding performance. A small number of our sites were entirely submerged and temporarily inoperable, even in locations with flood defences.

In response, we declared a company-wide incident and deployed our comprehensive plan, using a J-Cell military planning method. Despite this, our overall performance did not meet the levels we aspire to.

After hydraulic overload, blockages were the second biggest contributor to pollution. We clear over 40,000 blockages every single year, caused by wrongly flushed items, including a build-up of fats, oils and greases. This equates to one blockage every five minutes – of which 80% are avoidable.

While no spill to the environment is acceptable and we are disappointed to be off target, our lead measures are showing improvements, demonstrating that the investment and action taken in line with our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan are paying off. For example, we had 13% less pollution compared to 2021, another year impacted by wet weather.

To go further and faster, our shareholders have invested an extra £100 million to tackle pollution and spills. This investment is targeting risk reduction activities. We expect to see the risk reduction benefits come to fruition at the end of 2025. Our investments cover five key areas:

- £32 million on asset health interventions for pumping stations and Water Recycling Centres
- £17 million on system capacity including infiltration investigations and lining in key locations, plus investing in new tankers and jetters
- £22million on improving rising mains including a 104% increase in pressure monitors, implementing satellite technology, rehabilitating high-risk rising mains and surveying more than 6,500 locations with air valve surveys
- £22 million on blockage prevention including 8,000 additional sewer monitors, a programme of rehabilitation and risk reduction for more than 2,600 manholes and a supersized CCTV survey, cleanse and rehabilitation programme for more than 250km of pipes.
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£7 million on improving capability and insight across our teams, with new roles created.
This new investment is in line with the five core areas that we continue to implement actions in line with our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan, which include:

- Enhancing the assets we have, assessing where improvements can be made and rolling out targeted maintenance and resilience programmes to ensure the entire asset base is reliable.
- Bolstering blockage detection to identify potential problems before they happen.
- Ensuring the proactive monitoring we have embedded as business as usual is delivering maximum value; helping us to make informed decisions, alongside implementing new monitoring technologies to further support our efforts.
- Delivering consistent operational control standards and procedures, to ensure we remain focused on robust continuous improvement.
- Improving operational excellence, identifying areas we can improve and making changes as a result.

These core areas are supported by our zero pollutions mindset, which we are embedding right across the business.

4. Ofwat say that 'AW are also a long way from meeting their 2024-25 target' for pollution incidents (p.25). Last year, Cllr Gerstner asked Natasha Kenny from AW about pollution incidents:
'AW remained a two-star company; 33 sewerage pollution incidents per 10,000 km, AW caused 255 incidents in 2022. This included 11 serious incidents. More than half of all the serious pollution incidents nationally were from AW and Thames Water assets. AW was the worst-performing water company for self-reporting of all the pollution incident' (Cllr Gerstner, 2023, source Ofwat and BBC article).'
To which, Natasha and then her colleague Grant Tuffs responded:
'AW is not in a place it would like to be regarding the environmental assessment, the plan is to improve and do a better job, the number of pollutions AW had last year is not were
the company wants to be, there are new processes and improvements in place to better this area and AW have looked at other water companies to benchmark themselves to improve performance and best practice within the region. Grant Tuffs continued, "the figures are the figures, and the company takes this on board but there is a lot more positives to take away and improve on.'
Despite their confidence, there have been further pollution incidents, including a fine brought about by the EA, and another EA category one incident, which took place in Sept in Whittlesey, where close to a 1000 fish died. As such, what are Anglian Water doing to prevent such pollution incidents, as year on year, this cannot continue? When will AW mee their pollution incidents performance commitment levels?
Response:
Please see the answer to question 3 above for details of the actions we are taking in relation to pollution.
With regards to the incident at Stanground, we have given our findings to the Environment Agency (EA) for it to consider as part of its ongoing investigation. The EA will also be continuing to investigate the other outfalls which discharge in the area, but which aren't owned by Anglian Water. We await details of the EA's findings, and it would

not be appropriate for us to comment further or speculate ahead of this.
We share people's concerns about this distressing event and our teams worked hard alongside the EA to help the river to recover by deploying specialist aeration equipment.

5. Have there been discussions with Ofwat to monitor Anglian Water more closely?
Response:
As part of the Price Review 2024 process, (the water industry business plan consultation) Ofwat has evolved its monitoring framework for companies, including setting new requirements on companies called Price Control Deliverables. These will essentially monitor more closely the delivery of specific projects within companies' business plans and will require companies to return money to customers if projects aren't delivered. This is part of an overall evolution of how Ofwat intends to monitor the performance of companies in the next business plan period. These new monitoring arrangements and performance metrics will be confirmed when we receive the final determination on our next five-year business plan from Ofwat on 19th December.
Following the election, the Government has introduced the Water (Special Measures) Bill to Parliament. This Bill gives Ofwat and the EA more powers to monitor and penalise water companies where there are breaches of their duties.
The Government has established the water industry commission, chaired by Sir Jon Cunliffe, which will carry out a review of how the water industry is regulated in the long term. This review will launch a call for evidence in the new year and is due to report back to Government by the middle of 2025. This review is likely to shape how the industry is regulated in future. We are already engaged with the commission, providing answers to questions submitted to the water companies.

6. What is the most frequent cause of pollution incidents?
Response:
Hydraulic overload has been the most frequent cause of pollution incidents this year, whilst blockages are the second biggest contributor.

7. How do you remove detergents and other contaminants from the water supply and what percentage of our drinking water is made up of such substances? Is the position the same nationally or are there regional variations. What are the precise figures for Fenland and how does this compare to the national position?
Response:
Raw water (water abstracted from aquifers or rivers/reservoirs) will vary across our supply area. Some sources will need minimal filtration and treatment while others need more complex processes including Granular Activated Carbon filters or running the water through fine membranes to remove certain contaminants. There are several stages of sampling and online monitoring to verify the performance of the treatment processes. Sites will have automatic shutdowns if at any stage the water is not being treated correctly which could pose a risk to the water quality leaving the site. Further verification sampling is carried out as the water leaves the treatment works, downstream assets (e.g. water towers) and at customer taps.
All our water supply is delivered by following the drinking water quality standards published by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI); The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 . All water companies across England and

Wales have the same legislation. These regulations cover the maximum levels of any contaminant that is permitted to be in a water supply. As part of the same regulations there are minimum sampling requirements that all water companies must follow to prove the quality of the water, these sample results are sent to the DWI. There is also a mechanism for reporting any breaches of permitted levels to both the DWI and local authorities. Summary details of all water companies sampling performance is published by the DWI in their annual report.
Our overall water quality standards, including Fenland, compare favourably with the national position. Precise details of the water quality results in any specific area can be
found on our website: https://waterquality.anglianwater.com/map.aspx This lists all the parameters sampled as part of the regulations, the permitted legal levels, the max /min results and the number of failures.
For water recycling, the Environment Agency issues Environmental Permits for our discharges from water recycling centres. As a result, we control trade effluent to ensure that we are fully compliant and our staff, contractors, operations and the environment are protected.
Anyone proposing to discharge trade effluent to the public foul sewer needs prior written consent from us. Our staff have a legal right of access under the Water Industry Act 1991 to carry out monitoring and enforcement activities.

8. In the report it says that Anglian Water have submitted a storm overflow action plan to Defra to ensure that they are not discharging more than 10 times a year. That's still too many. This is said to occur during high rainfall and due to the age of the sewers. I would like to know how many sewers of this type there are in our region, as opposed to the ones where the surface water is separate to the sewage. What plan have Anglian Water got to replace these types of sewer?
Response:
We have permits to operate all our storm overflows and these are issued by the Environment Agency.
We've been investing in dealing with storm overflows for many years, prioritising that investment to where it will have the most benefit to the environment.
From 2025, we have proposed a further £1bn investment will go directly into reducing storm overflow spills, by creating new storage and ways to prevent surface water from entering the sewer network, installing additional monitoring and increasing the capacity of our treatment sites to deal with more rainfall as a result of unpredictable weather.
We aim to reduce discharges from storm overflows by 17% in the next five years, in line with the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan.
There are 18 storm overflows in Fenland. All of these are fitted with an Event Duration Monitor (EDM) which measure the number of spills at each storm overflow point and the number of hours an overflow discharged for.
The data from our EDMs enables us to be as open and transparent as possible and feeds into our interactive, real-time map, which went live in April 2024. Our map shows where our storm overflow monitors are located, how often they spill and the length of time they have
been spilling. https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/environment/storm-overflows/storm-overflow-map/
Water UK has also published a new searchable online platform outlining all water company plans to reduce the impact of storm overflows between now and 2050: https://www.water.org.uk/overflows-plan
Examples of proposed investment in Fenland during 2025-2030 (subject to approval by Ofwat), include:
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£1,270,000 at March Dartford Road/Elliott Road SSO to reduce spills to 10 per year by 2050 by installing Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
o
£479,000 to reduce storm overflows to 10 per year by 2050 at March Wisbech Norwood Road - Smart Networks and new screening

9. In terms of tackling pollution, the report states that work has started but that you know you must do better. I would like to know what the work has already taken place and how you propose to improve on it in our area?
Response:
Please see the answer to question 3 above for details of the actions we are taking in relation to pollutions.
Under the Dynamic Sewer Visualisation programme, we have installed 676 monitors to date in the postcode areas covered by Fenland and are planning to install around 890 more. These enable us to monitor sewer levels and identify and any problems and blockages quickly.
We're also keen to encourage customers to protect their pipes from blockages and to continue to raise awareness about the importance of only flushing the 3 p's – pee, poo and (toilet) paper to keep our sewers clear. We are, therefore, launching a new campaign – 'Just bin it' to encourage customers to protect their pipes from blockages. The campaign is being launched across our region. We would appreciate any help the Council can provide in highlighting the importance of this and in promoting the 'Just bin it' message.
https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/services/wastewater-treatment/down-plugholes-and-toilets/
We have also established a Multi-Agency Group which covers the Cambridgeshire North area, including Manea, Coates and March, to work with other agencies to enhance preparedness, response, and recovery efforts related to prolonged wet weather periods that can result in hydraulic overload.

10. Sewage is still being trucked away from Wimblington and Doddington, what has been done to alleviate this and what further works are planned to tackle this issue?
Response:
Tankering, in terms of removing sludge from Water Recycling Centres (WRC) is a routine operation and part of normal business as usual. We do, however, sometimes have to temporarily increase tankering if there are any specific issues at a site.
Doddington WRC currently has some increased tankering whilst we make improvements to improve flows at the site. This work is due to be completed this month (December).
Doddington Cooks Green Pumping Station has historically had to be tankered when it became overwhelmed during wet weather. We have, however, fitted a larger pump to help reduce the number of times the station is overwhelmed.
We have made adjustments to how the balance tank is controlled at Doddington Eastmoor Lane Pumping Station which has reduced the need for tankering.
Sites in the Wimblington catchment do not currently have any issues which would increase tankering, apart from routine tankers to remove sludge.

ONGOING ACTIONS			
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WATCHING BRIEF ITEMS			
		None at present	