



*Meeting:* **Scrutiny Commission**

*Date/Time:* **Wednesday, 8 March 2017 at 10.30 am**

*Location:* **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

*Contact:* **Mr. S. J. Weston (Tel: 0116 305 6226)**

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### **Membership**

Mr. S. J. Galton CC (Chairman)

Mrs. R. Camamile CC    Mr. K. W. P. Lynch CC  
Mrs. J. A. Dickinson CC    Mrs. C. M. Radford CC  
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC    Mr. R. Sharp CC  
Dr. S. Hill CC    Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC  
Mr. D. Jennings CC    Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

### **A G E N D A SUPPLEMENT**

**The following additional reports has now been published, agenda item 8 of the main agenda refers.**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
8. Housing Growth and Water – Responses from Severn Trent Water	(Pages 3 to 11)



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**SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 8 MARCH 2017 AT 10.30AM****SEVERN TRENT WATER RESPONSE****Severn Trent Water - Position Statement**

**As a water company we have an obligation to provide water supplies and sewage treatment capacity for future development. It is important for us to work collaboratively with Local Planning Authorities to provide relevant assessments of the impacts of future developments.**

**Where we consider there may be an issue we would discuss in further detail with the local planning authority. We will complete any necessary improvements to provide additional capacity once we have sufficient confidence that a development will go ahead. We do this to avoid making investments on speculative developments to minimise customer bills.**

**Theme 1 - Are STW prepared for housing growth in Leicestershire**

- 1. Is there enough water supply and waste water treatment capacity to meet Leicestershire's planned growth?**

**STW Response**

As part of our underlying duties to accommodate new development this includes providing additional water and waste water treatment capacity as and when it is required. We also have a duty to keep existing customers' bills low as possible and so to reduce the risk of abortive investment the timing of capacity upgrades are dependent on development certainty. We have detailed discussions with developers which is done through the Local Plan process which supports the Water Cycle Studies. This will make sure that we can plan for any upgrade that is required.

This approach ensures that whilst there may be localised capacity pinch points, we are able to accommodate new development in a timely manner but also ensure investment is spent as efficiently as possible. In light of this we are confident that we can accommodate the planned growth across Leicestershire.

- 2. If not, how will any shortfalls be met?**

**STW Response**

Through our regulatory framework agreed with Ofwat we have funding allocated to accommodate planned growth to ensure that any capacity shortfalls can be addressed in line with development occupancy.

- 3. Do you have any plans to increase your reservoir capacity and if you do are those plans likely to affect Leicestershire in any substantive way? (For example Leicestershire is a mineral rich County that has potential for water storage capacity).**

STW Response

Our next Water Resource Management Workshop is to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at the Severn Trent Offices in Coventry.

This workshop will help you to understand our future forecasts for demand and supply. I can confirm that the following people across Leicestershire have received an invitation to the workshop.

- Tom Purnell (Assistant Chief Executive of Leicester County Council)
- Rob Foers (Leicester City Council)
- Ian Nelson (North West Leicestershire)
- Pat Willoughby (North West Leicestershire)

Should you need any further details about our Water Resource Management Plan it can be found here: <https://www.severntrent.com/about-us/future-plans/water-resource-management/water-resource-managment-plan/>

- 4. Is there a lesser or greater issue between rural and urban areas in meeting the water supply and treatment capacity demands of new developments in the future?**

STW Response

We would not anticipate capacity problems within the urban areas of our network, any issues can be addressed through reinforcing our network. However, the ability to support significant development in the rural areas is likely to have a greater impact and require greater reinforcement to accommodate greater demands.

- 5. How is the standard of water treatment regulated to ensure it is safe for introduction back into the water cycle?**

STW Response

N/A

- 6. There have been a number of flooding incidents in Leicestershire involving foul sewage from combined surface water and sewerage systems over the last 12 months. Are you investing in existing waste water conveyance systems, as well as planning for future increased demands?**

STW Response

As part of our sewer flooding programme we will continue to invest to upgrade the public sewerage networks to alleviate current flood risk.

In accordance with our general duty to accommodate planned development we are also providing capacity enhancements to ensure new development does not impact on future performance.

## **To what extent have STW been involved in the planning process to date**

- 7. How does or has STW engaged with planning authorities in Leicestershire about planned growth?**

### STW Response

Severn Trent Water are always keen to speak to the Local Planning Authorities at a very early stage of planning which will give us the opportunity to comment on any development proposals. We have engaged with Leicestershire County Council regarding their Local Development Plans.

- 8. How does the distribution of water supply and treatment affect where development can or can't go?**

### STW Response

With regards to water supply to a new development any issues will be addressed through reinforcing our network. (See no: 4)

## **How can the County Council assist STW in preparing for the housing growth agenda**

- 9. Are you aware of the Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire?**

### STW Response

All strategic growth plans are covered in our business plan.

- 10. How is STW planning to engage with the preparation of the SGP? Did STW see, and provide comments on, the Draft Strategic Growth Statement which was consulted on in 2016?**

### STW Response

When consulted we provide comments on long term plans to make sure the right infrastructure can be put in place so that deliverability of the development can be phased accordingly. Our records does not show any specific comments regarding the consultation for the Strategic Growth Plan Statement.

- 11. How can the County Council assist in speeding up utilities connections to new homes? (Ref: LGC article – 4 Jan 2017 – Essex and Kent CC infrastructure pilot – appended)**

### STW Response

N/A

## **Are there any capacity issues in respect of sewage and water treatment?**

- 12. Is it more difficult to supply water or waste water treatment to rural areas than to urban areas? (similar to Q4 above)**

### STW Response

(Refer to Answer 4)

- 13. Are there any particular areas within the County that are more difficult than others to service?**

### STW Response

This is quite an open question, however in line with our general duty to accommodate new development Severn Trent will ensure capacity is available as and when required.

- 14. If there are such areas are these clearly identified to local planning authorities in order for them to take into account when planning for future developments?**

### STW Response

N/A

- 15. What do you expect of developers?**

### STW Response

We would like to be consulted on at an early stage of planning so that we can work collaboratively towards phasing of the development. This would give them the opportunity to provide a good quality design that complies with our specifications and will be cost effective for both parties. In addition we expect surface water to be managed in line with the Government's Water Strategy, Future Water. Surface water needs to be managed sustainably and we expect the Leicestershire County Council in their role as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) would ensure that surface water is managed sustainably such that the impact on the public sewerage system is kept to a minimum. Hence for new developments we would not expect surface water to be conveyed to our foul or combined sewage system and, where practicable, we support the removal of surface water already connected to foul or combined sewer.

- 16. Can you explain how Severn Trent Water is tackling the issue of leakage from the water supply system**

- 17. Does STW have published response times for attending to burst pipes and water leaks affecting the public highway?**

### STW Response

(16 & 17) We are always working to improve our use of water and leakage is just one way. There are a few ways we do this, like by finding and fixing leaks, improving and replacing our supply pipes, fitting meters for free and giving advice to our customers about how to save water. Our teams work around the clock to find and fix leaking pipes as quickly as possible. More than half of our leaks are underground, making them quite difficult to find, so to help our teams, we've invested a lot of money in high-tech equipment and have also worked to develop our own cutting

edge technology to help us too. We have our area split into what we call DMAs – District Metered Areas – which are discreet areas with a water meter on the inlet and outlet. We know how much water is consumed by customers – through domestic water meters and by our monitoring programme, so if we know how much goes in, gets used up and comes out of an area, what's left could be leakage and we can then send our teams to that area to find any leaks. We also have loggers throughout our water pipe network that will show changes in flow, and this again will help us to pinpoint any leaks.

Since 2011 we've reduced the time customers are off supply as a result of burst by 69%, although actually, only one in ten of the leaks we fix actually affect our customers. We are one of only seven companies to keep leakage at or below 2011/12 levels and, in fact, we reduced it from 464MI/day to 434MI/day. We fixed on average 120 leaks each and every day for the last year, which is 44,400 leaks fixed in the last financial year.

We have over 46,000 kilometres of water pipes across our region, so our customers will often spot a leak before we can. We have a year round campaign to get our customers to spot and report leaks to us – the sooner we know about them, the sooner we can fix them. Customers can report leaks either on our website at [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk) or by calling us on 0800 783 4444.

We aim to fix all leaks as quickly as possible, but we do have to prioritise based on whether customers have lost supply and whether the leak is on a main road, causing traffic issues.

#### **18. How are you getting customers to use less water and has it been successful?**

##### STW Response

In line with our customer expectations and statutory water efficiency duty, we are committed to promote water efficiency.

We offer advice and support to all of our customers to influence behaviour changes to reduce the amount of water usage and provide free water saving devices that are simple to install.

In the period 2010 – 2015 our education and Water Efficiency programme helped customers reduced water use by over 20MI/d and we have a programme to deliver even more for the period 2015 – 2020.

One programme includes undertaking audits for customers' homes and installing water efficiency devices for free. This programme reduces customers' homes by 10%.

#### **19. How are your plans, for waste water conveyance and treatment, considered against the need to tackle the growing problem of flooding in this county?**

##### STW Response

Whilst Severn Trent is responsible for reducing flood risk associated with rainfall overloading of the public sewerage network we are not responsible for all flooding across the county. However we do recognise that in instances where there are multiple interactions at play (e.g. sewer flooding together with highway drainage/water course flooding) then we see the benefit of working with other flood risk stakeholders to work in partnership.

With this in mind we are working closely with our partners to prioritise investment opportunities to mitigate the risk of flooding in general. As the root cause of all flood risk issues is excessive surface water it is therefore vital that new development in the county is managed sustainably and so to mitigate the future impact of development, whether on sewerage or watercourse capacity, it is

essential that the LLFA ensure surface water run-off is managed sustainably.

## **Do some parts of the County require more investment than others?**

### **20. Where does Leicestershire mainly get its water from, how does it get here and is that source secure and sustainable?**

#### STW Response

Leicestershire mainly receives water from Melbourne water treatment works where treated water is transferred to Leicestershire via large service reservoirs at Ragdale and Hallgates. Melbourne water treatment works receives raw water from the River Dove via large storage reservoirs at Staunton Harold and Foremark.

### **21. How does the transfer of water from one region to meet the demands of another take place?**

- a) Could this affect where development can go?
- b) Are there any such issues in Leicestershire?

#### STW Response

Using our Strategic Grid we have the flexibility to move water around when and where it is required.

### **22. To what extent are aquifers the main supply of domestic water?**

### **23. Are there any issues in terms of overall abstraction (from aquifers or rivers) that has led to falling river levels creating dangers for long-term water supply or impacts on sensitive environments?**

#### STW Response

The link below will give you a full description and the process we follow to manage any issues that may arise.

<https://www.severntrent.com/about-us/future-plans/water-resource-management/final-wrmp-documents/>

This is a link to our current 2014 drought plan which is a plan that sets out how we will manage our resources and supply system

<https://www.severntrent.com/about-us/future-plans/water-resource-management/drought-plan/>

### **24. It is understood that one of the issues facing water supply is replacing licensed water abstraction that is no longer environmentally sustainable. What is the position in Leicestershire and how is it being tackled?**

#### STW Response

I agree that the sustainability of licences is an issue facing water supply however for Leicestershire the position is good. Only a small portion of the county is supplied by groundwater from Severn Trent.

Leicestershire is in a fairly comfortable position in terms of the sustainability of the abstraction licences we have that supply in the county.



**25. Are the issues that you have identified for investment likely to increase the cost of water supply to domestic and commercial customers?**

STW Response

This is covered in our regulated framework.

**26. It is understood that nationally a significant amount of water mains and sewers are more than 100 years old.**

- a) **Is Leicestershire typical?**
- b) **Do they cause a problem?**
- c) **What plans do you have to replace them?**
- d) **How do you prioritise the resources available to deal with their replacement?**

STW Response

(26 a – d Not Applicable – our investment programme covers this).

**27. Spreading of sewage sludge is a practice that can cause significant concerns in localities at certain times of the year.**

- a) **Can you explain the reasons for that and the benefits it brings?**
- b) **What is your practice in dealing with community concerns?**
- c) **Do you have sufficient land holdings to undertake this activity?**
- d) **Is there an alternative to this land spreading activity?**

STW Response

We spread bio solids to land because this is the best environmental option. Bio solids act as a soil conditioner and fertiliser. This is particularly important for phosphorus which is globally in short supply.

In Leicestershire, our sewage sludge is treated to industry standards and best practice at Wanlip (Leicester) or Melton Mowbray. The products of the process are biogas and bio solids. We use the biogas to produce electricity and heat in Combined Heat and Power (CHP) engines. This electricity and heat is used on site for the sewage treatment process.

A new assured standard called the Bio Solids Assurance Scheme is being developed currently which is endorsed by Red Tractor and other interested stakeholders. We are members of this new scheme and we expect our sludge to meet the requirements of the scheme.

The alternative to spreading bio solids to land would be land fill or incineration. Both of these activities are expensive in terms of cost and environmental impact. If we were to dispose of sludge in this way, our customers' bills would increase.

**28. What is the potential for generating more bio-energy from sewage/water treatment facilities?**

**29. Are there opportunities to combine the use of the bio-energy with other forms of development? (Eg. combined heat and power for housing, commercial or other development?)**

STW Response

28. & 29. We are constantly looking for new opportunities to maximise the potential energy generation from sewage and water treatment. As well as biogas production we have a wind turbine

at Wanlip.

We are the industry leaders in Bio Energy and our aim is to be 50% self-generating by 2020.

**30. How do you prioritise investment in waste water conveyance and treatment systems, particularly in light of historic flooding events?**

STW Response

As a regulated body we have specific requirements to keep records of properties that have been affected by sewer flooding and we use this information, together with outputs from our hydraulic sewer models to prioritise investment.



## Counties join infrastructure pilot to speed up house building

4 January, 2017 **By Mark Smulian**

Two county councils are participating in a pilot scheme to speed up utilities connections to new homes.

The government-backed pilot will seek to reduce delays caused by builders being unable to secure water, gas, or electricity supplies to homes with a view to rolling it out across the UK later this year, if the initiative is successful.

It follows a report last year from the Housing & Finance Institute (HFI) on how delays by water companies specifically were holding up progress on home building.

Essex and Kent CCs are taking part in the pilot along with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, the Home Builders Federation, developers Laing O'Rourke and Keepmoat, Anglian Water, and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The pilot will look to identify, assess, and unblock infrastructure problems that delay construction. The scheme will focus on housing developments that have been delayed due to a lack of water, sewage, electricity, gas or road connectivity.

Housing and planning minister Gavin Barwell said: "I welcome this new pilot scheme and its focus on identifying ways of working together to overcome infrastructure barriers, and I look forward to seeing the initial report on its findings."

HFI chief executive Natalie Elphicke said developers often complained that poor utilities and infrastructure connections prevent them from building homes more rapidly.

"Water and sewage connectivity is a particular problem, with some water companies completely failing to deliver what housing developers require," she said.

"This has been slowing down the rate of housing completions right across the country."

HFI research found water companies could take up to a year to connect a property and still meet their regulatory target.

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