

A photograph of a long, multi-arched stone bridge spanning a river. The bridge is constructed from weathered, dark stone blocks. The river is filled with water and has a dense growth of tall green reeds along the banks. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. A thin power line runs diagonally across the upper portion of the image. In the background, a brick building with a gabled roof is partially visible on the left side.

Appendix E

West Country Water Resources webinar questions and answers

Appendix E: Webinar Questions and Answers

Question asked in the webinar	WCWRG response
<p>I realise that the benefits are hard to quantify, but was consideration given to highlighting the impact of improvements to land management on the security of drinking water supplies and the ecological wellbeing of waterbodies?</p>	<p>Yes, we did consider these topics, for more information take a look at section 6.1.1 Focus Catchments, page 28 of the Draft Regional plan here.</p>
<p>How are you going to ensure strong NGO catchment/river representation on WCWRG?</p>	<p>We are currently reviewing our governance processes to ensure that the West Country Water Resources (WCWR) has representation from across a wider number of sectors than just the water supply and wastewater companies.</p>
<p>How are you going to deliver spatial planning and implementation of nature-based solutions that integrate with other flood, water quality and aquatic biodiversity drivers?</p>	<p>Nature based solutions are part of the water company plans for 2025-2030 and are encouraged by OFWAT and the Environment Agency. We recognise the importance of the involvement of third-party companies in both delivering nature based solutions and the development of the regional plan.</p>
<p>How are you going to accommodate an up-to-date understanding of the quality of the water resource available rather than just quantity?</p>	<p>Better raw water quality means less treatment (cost/energy/carbon etc) therefore catchment protection is key and that's where the focus catchments come in to play with Catchment Management measures. Drinking water quality is then protect further by the barriers provided by treatment processes.</p>

The Draft Plan states: "It is highly unlikely that the options in themselves will be net zero" and "Nature based solutions will have an important role in achieving net zero in the west country plan area."

Additionally, the Draft Plan focuses purely on carbon net zero/carbon emission (what about the other GHGs?).

Furthermore, the Draft Plan does not seem to mention circularity or other approaches to achieving net zero to take things broader than carbon. Finally, the proposed "Production of an action plan to reduce business water consumption." seems disproportionate in its ambition in comparison to the new supply side options.

Will businesses be encouraged to identify their own alternative/'renewable' sources of water alongside demand reduction options in order to maximise flexibility and resilience through a more hybrid centralised/decentralised system?

Otherwise, how can 'best value' options be determined within the confines of such a limited approach, which remains siloed to the water sector and does not diversify beyond the status quo of the centralised (not-fit-for-[Future]-purpose) system? Additionally, are WCWR Group pushing back against central policy and regulation that is also becoming not-fit-for-[Future]-purpose?

I am particularly interested in water recycling and the elimination of chemical contaminants.

Carbon Net Zero is a collective term used in the Draft Regional Plan to describe several greenhouse gases.

Thanks you for raising circular economy issues, we recognised this as an important and growing area of carbon reduction, resource neutral and environmentally sustainable solutions. This is an area that we will consider as we move into the second plan.

The regional planning process does not consider the carbon costs of moving water around catchment areas. However, the regional planning process aims to reduce the need of each business to source and pump water from its chosen supply source as a solo venture. Building Strategic Resource Options (SRO's) and sharing the water via a conjunctive use water network will help to lower the overall carbon intensity of the Water Resource Management Plans (WRMP's) for each company.

As we move forward, we are considering how we can establish a more integrated network approach between businesses.

You may be interested in the proposed Poole water recycling Strategic Resource Option (SRO). You can learn more about this proposed strategic resource on page 82 of the Draft Regional Plan [here](#).

What engagement have you had with local authority Local plans for housing development which will impact on demand?

Local Authority Local Plans are a key input into our assessment of future housing growth. We consider both housing and population growth within our projections of future demand.

How are you feeding back these plans to local authorities? Mid Devon District “sits” in your East Devon Catchment which can mean this relevance of these plans is misunderstood in terms of relevance and importance to residents and councillors

We regularly talk to planning departments in Local Authorities. Within our plans we have to ensure that we can meet the additional water demands of new businesses and households.

Regarding growth scenarios - I note the SWW local plan based forecasts project the highest level of house building - about 30% higher than current trends. You have understandably assumed growth in line with ONS growth forecasts. Can i ask though whether your plan identifies infrastructure implications for the different scenarios specifically the highest development scenario (local plan based) i.e. location and land implications such as new or upgraded infrastructure? Grant Jackson Plymouth City Council

The Regional Water Resource Plans are strategic in scale and consider whether there is enough water in the area. They do not necessarily go down to the level of ensuring that the existing local network is sufficient to meet the additional needs of specific developments.

For further information with this level of detail you would need to consult the relevant Water Company Business Plans, which will be published later this year.

We test our plan against different growth scenarios, including higher Local Plan growth rates to see if it can cope. We test against a wide range of different scenarios and use these to build an 'adaptive plan'. This shows our position if the future turns out differently compared to what we expect to happen.

Plym and Dart overs (rivers?) showed negative deficit in earlier slides. How will these be addressed, and 3 options are not impacting these.

The selected Strategic Resource Options (SROs) have been included in addition to in-company WRMP24 (Water Resources Management Plan for 2024) options for reducing

the overall water deficits within the Plymouth and Dartmoor catchments.

The SROs have been situated to meet local needs in their catchments and target areas where their implementation would be possible within the timelines established within the regional plan. The current SROs would also be readily deployable assets that meet the needs of Bristol Water, South West Water and Wessex Water

WRMPs (water Resource Management Plans) should, where relevant, reflect the regional plan unless there is clear justification for not doing so. Regional and company plans are developed in parallel, and any differences or inconsistencies should be addressed throughout process. The process for reconciling and refining differences in the plans should be described along with iterations needed.

How does the regional plan interact with WRMP's and other water resource plans?

You can find more information on the relationship between Water Resource Management Plans's (WRMPs) and regional plans on page 3 of our Non-Technical Summary of the Draft Regional Plan [here](#) or on the government website [here](#).

Why do we need a Regional Plan?

The pressures on water supply and the environment continue to increase as the region faces challenges such as climate change, population growth and economic growth, all of which will affect future demand.

In our Draft Regional Plan we set out our long-term water requirement for the region to 2050, and the options available to respond to those needs.

The formation of the regional water resource planning groups was an initiative formed from the Environment Agency's 2020 Water Resource National Framework (WRNF). It identified the need for regional collaboration across five different groups of water companies operating in similar geographic locations in England and Wales. Each region has been asked to produce a single plan that:

- Enhances water supply resilience
- Considers a range of uncertainties and future scenarios
- Develops a preferred plan for the region.

Together, the five regional plans must meet the collective national need.