niwater

Delivering what matters

PC28

Business Plan

Delivering what's needed for society, economy and the environment.



PC28: Delivering what Northern Ireland needs

Jo Aston
Chair of the Board



Dr Sara Venning
Chief Executive



Northern Ireland's water and wastewater services are fundamental to everyday life. They protect public health and the environment, support homes and businesses and enable economic growth. As Chair and Chief Executive of NI Water, we share a responsibility to protect these essential services and publicly owned assets while building a more resilient and sustainable system for the future.

PC28 sets out our proposed plan for 2028 to 2033, focused on protecting essential services, improving environmental outcomes, supporting sustainable growth and strengthening resilience.

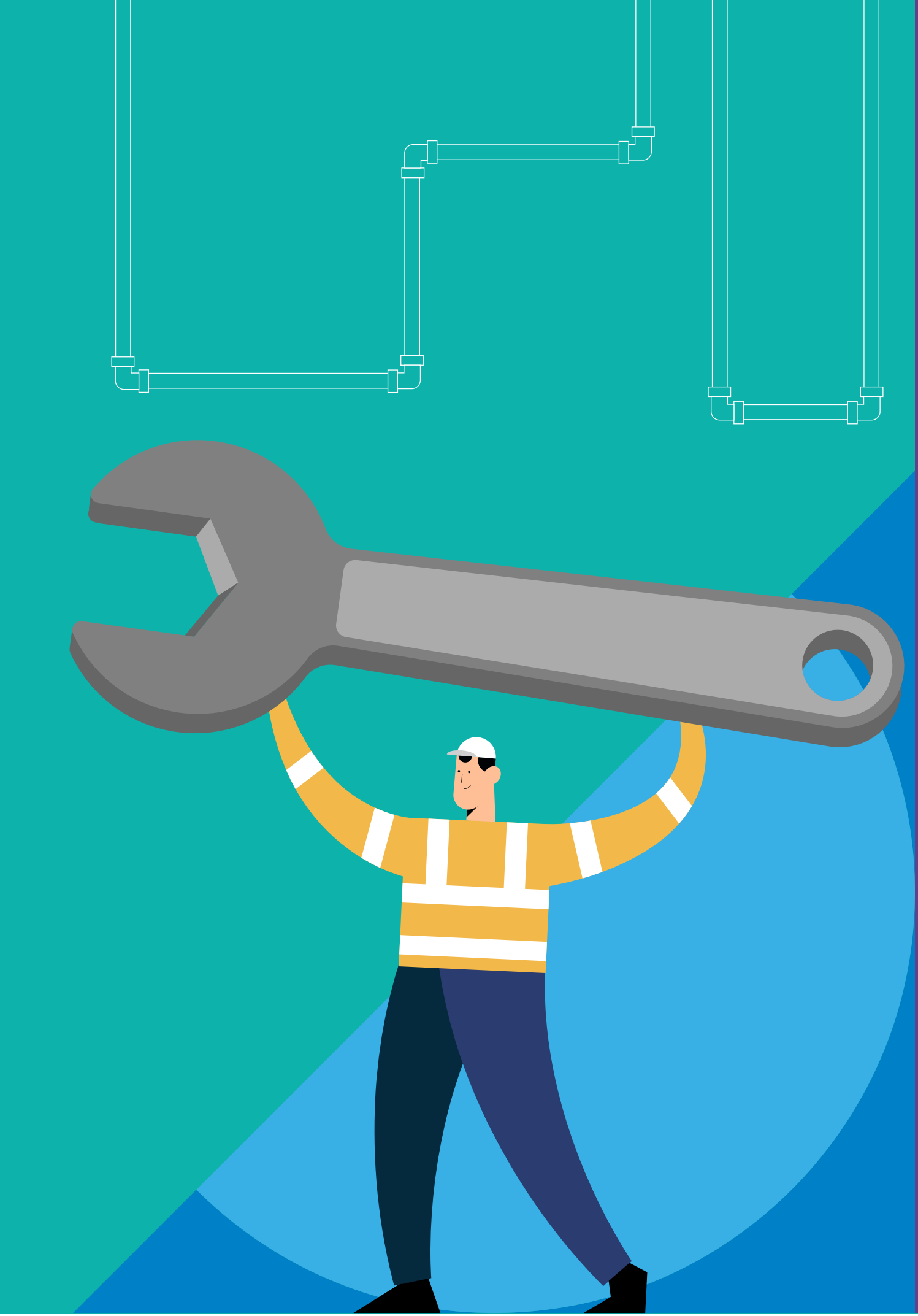
The challenge is considerable. Ageing infrastructure, wastewater capacity constraints, environmental pressures, tightening standards and climate change all require sustained action. We cannot address every need in five years, so PC28 focuses on the highest-priority investment that can realistically and efficiently be progressed.

Investment alone will not be enough. PC28 combines investment with innovation, technology and new approaches to make better use of our assets and resources. It builds on NI Water's efficiency improvements, with a continued focus on strong governance and value for money.

Delivering the Plan will require full and timely funding. Without it, investment will be deferred and risks and pressures carried forward.

Ultimately, PC28 is about securing an essential public service for Northern Ireland, now and for the future. We are committed to delivering the Plan efficiently and responsibly, working with government, regulators, our people and partners to deliver for customers, communities, the environment and the economy.

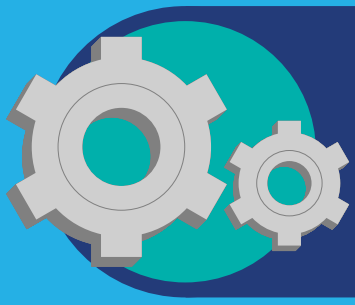




PC28 at a glance

PC28 is NI Water's five-year Business Plan for 2028 to 2033 for Northern Ireland. It sets out the investment and funding needed to maintain essential services, meet statutory obligations and make targeted progress on resilience, the environment and growth.

PC28 focuses on the highest-priority investment that can realistically and efficiently be progressed over five years, as part of a longer-term programme extending beyond 2033.



£13.5 billion

Long-term water and wastewater infrastructure need, reflecting ageing assets, current statutory and regulatory requirements, environmental pressures, capacity constraints, demand and climate change.



£3.3 billion

PC28 capital investment to maintain essential services and address priority water, wastewater, environmental and growth needs.



£6.2 billion

Total PC28 funding requirement, covering capital investment, day-to-day services and financing obligations.



Five years

The PC28 period from 2028 to 2033.

How we will invest £3.3 billion and what it will achieve

The £3.3 billion capital programme will maintain essential water and wastewater services, strengthen water resilience, improve wastewater and environmental performance and address priority constraints to growth.



£1.6 billion
to maintain services and compliance



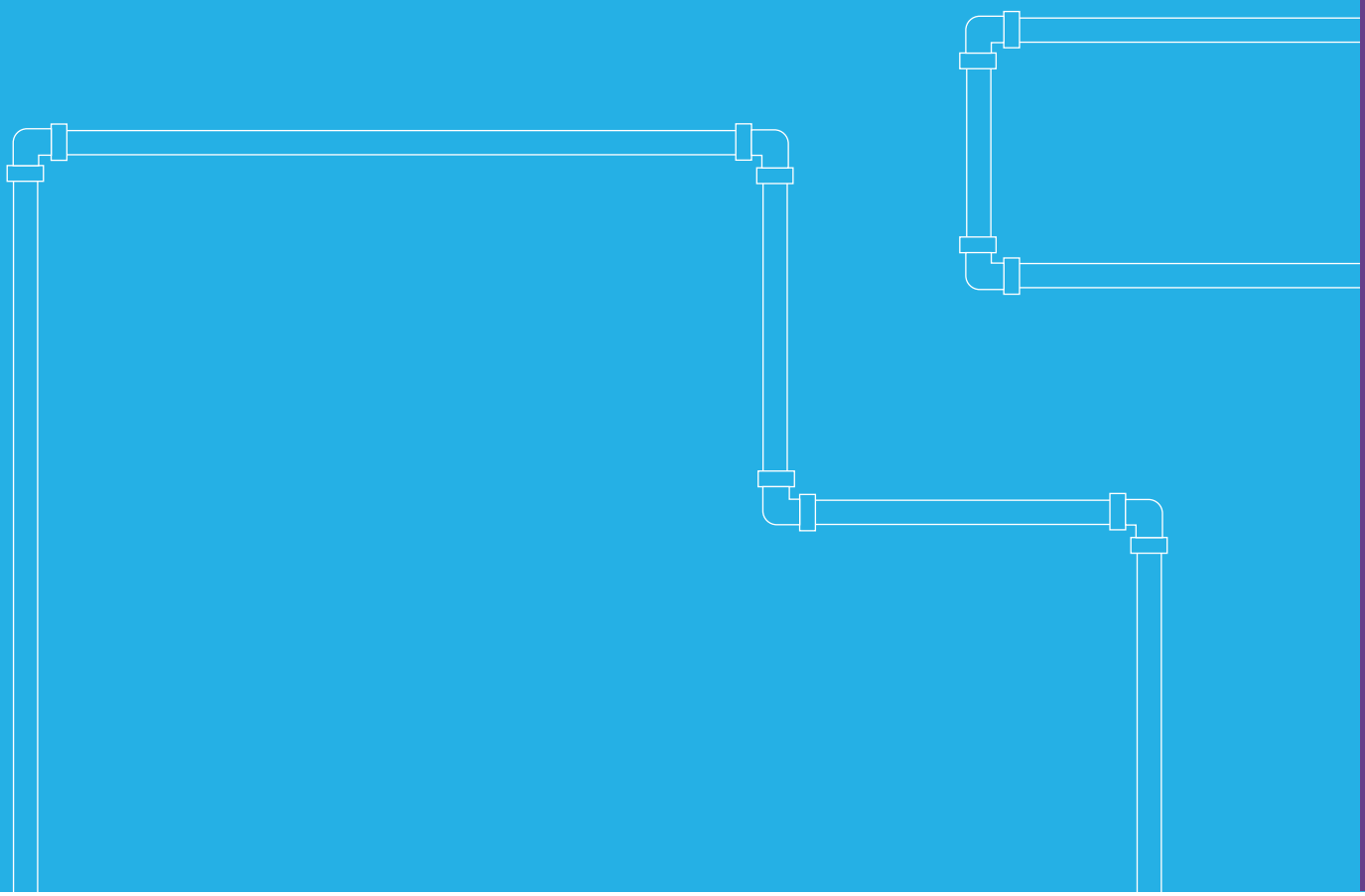
£0.7 billion
to improve water services



£1.0 billion
to improve wastewater, the environment and capacity for growth.

Across the programme, better information, technology and innovation will help NI Water make better use of existing assets, strengthen resilience and secure the best value from investment.

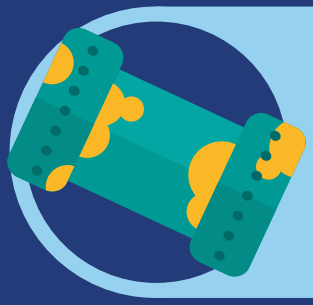
Successful delivery will depend on full and timely funding.



Why investment is needed

Northern Ireland's water and wastewater infrastructure has developed over many decades. Much of it is ageing, while demand, environmental requirements and climate pressures are increasing.

Investment is needed to manage several complex challenges.



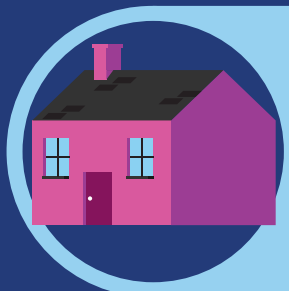
Ageing infrastructure

Ageing assets increase the risk of failure, service disruption and higher future costs. Sustained maintenance and renewal are essential to protect critical infrastructure and maintain safe, reliable services.



Wastewater and environmental pressures

Wastewater capacity constraints can restrict development and increase environmental and compliance risks. Investment is needed to improve network and treatment performance, reduce pollution and target the areas of greatest need.



Housing and economic growth

Water and wastewater capacity is essential to new development. With not all constraints capable of being addressed during PC28, investment must be targeted where it can best support sustainable housing and economic growth.



Climate and resilience

Climate change is increasing pressure on water quality, water availability and wastewater systems. Investment, alongside better data, technology, demand management and innovative approaches, will help strengthen resilience and support NI Water's pathway towards net zero.

The full infrastructure need cannot be addressed in five years. PC28 therefore targets the most pressing needs while recognising that sustained investment and innovation will be required beyond 2033.

What PC28 will deliver

PC28 will translate the £3.3 billion capital programme into targeted improvements across water and wastewater services.

Maintaining services and compliance

Investment will maintain and renew critical water and wastewater assets, support statutory and regulatory compliance and deliver inescapable and committed projects.

This includes addressing specific risks such as wastewater sludge processing and incineration assets approaching the end of their operational lives.

Reducing carbon emissions and increasing the use of renewable energy are important components of NI Water's sustainability ambitions. NI Water's Climate Change Strategy includes an ambition to reduce territorial-based emissions by at least 16.6k tCO_2e by 2032, based on 2023/24 reported emissions.



£1.6 billion

Investing in water services

PC28 will protect drinking water quality and strengthen the resilience of supplies under changing environmental conditions.

Examples of what the programme is expected to deliver by the end of PC28:

- Increasing drinking water production capacity by 21 million litres per day.
- Adding new treated water storage capacity equivalent to four Olympic-sized swimming pools, with further capacity planned beyond PC28.
- Strengthening 11 strategic water pipelines, improving resilience for around 55,000 properties.
- Upgrading seven water treatment works, with improvements starting at a further three.
- Improve resilience to the effects of blue-green algae, helping protect water supplies serving around 76,000 people and reduce taste and odour issues that can cause customer concern.



£0.7 billion

Investing in wastewater, the environment and growth

PC28 will start to improve wastewater performance, reduce environmental risks and address priority capacity constraints.

Examples of what the programme is expected to deliver include:

- Reducing areas of the network closed for development from 52 to 21, resolving issues for 8 of 13 town centres and providing pathways to support connections for around 50,000 new properties.
- Resolving 54 storm overflows classed as unsatisfactory.
- Installing 1,200 Event Duration Monitors (EDMs) at storm overflows.
- Upgrading 39 treatment works and renovating or replacing 75km of failing sewers.
- Removing 15 properties from the internal sewer flooding risk register.



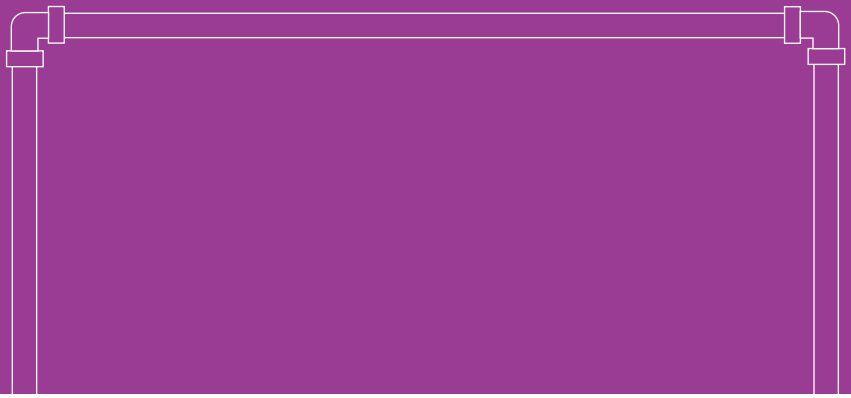
£1.0 billion

Transforming how we deliver

PC28 will combine investment in physical assets with better data, monitoring, technology and innovative approaches. This will improve understanding of asset condition and network performance, help identify problems earlier and support alternatives to conventional engineering solutions where these can provide better value or deliver outcomes faster.

The aim is to make the most of existing infrastructure, target investment effectively and secure the best value from every pound invested.







Lough Fingrean impounding reservoir, County Tyrone.

Funding, affordability and deliverability

PC28 requires around £6.2 billion of funding between 2028 and 2033.



£3.4 billion
public subsidy in lieu of domestic water charges;



£1.9 billion
borrowing and working capital; and

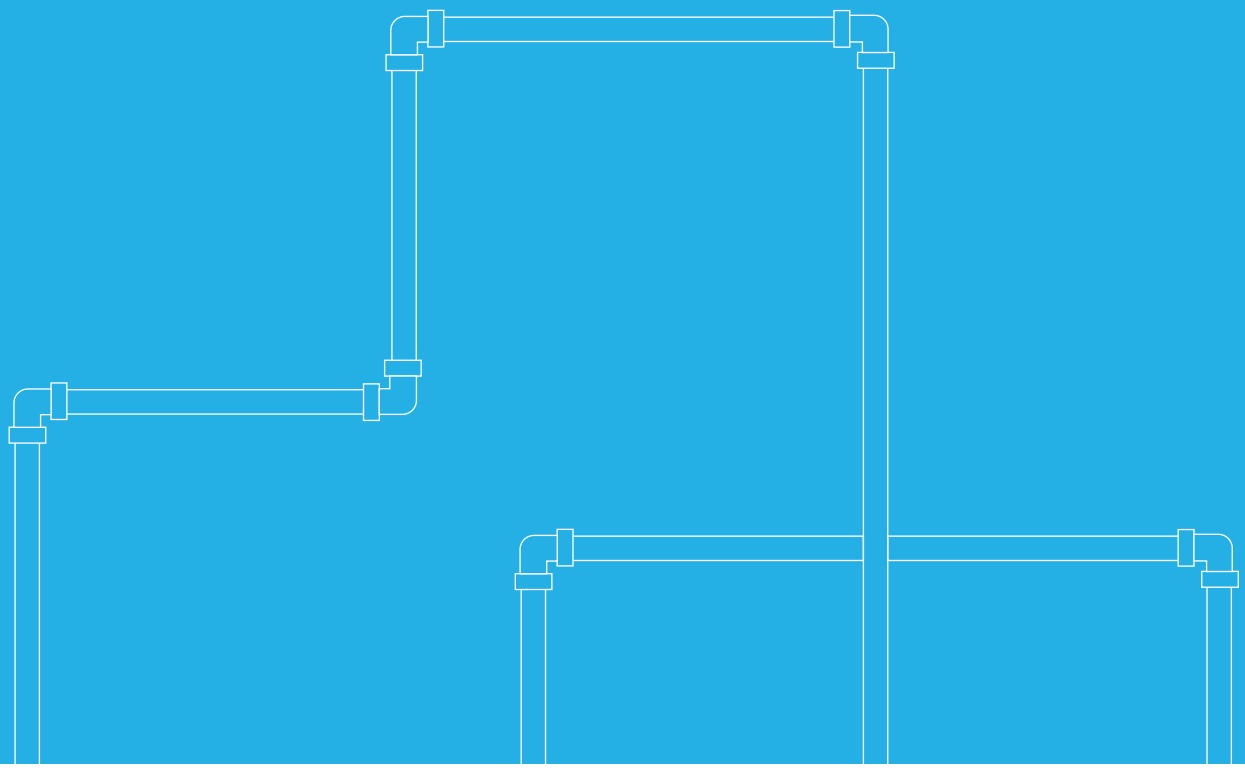


£0.9 billion
from business customer charges.

This will fund the £3.3 billion capital programme, the day-to-day operation and maintenance of water and wastewater services, and NI Water's financing obligations.

The Utility Regulator independently assesses NI Water's Business Plan and funding requirements, including whether the proposed investment is efficient, deliverable and affordable.

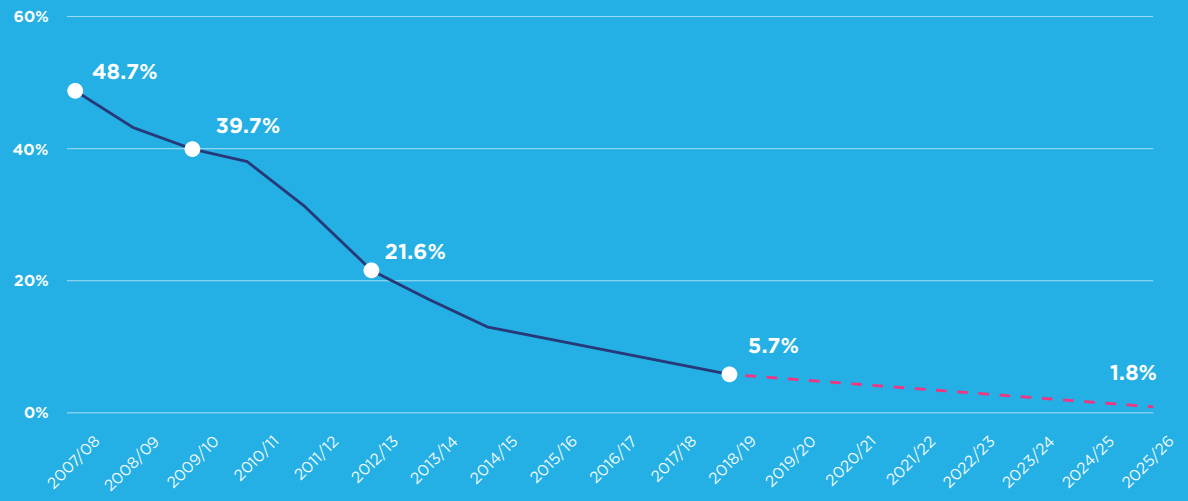
Securing this funding in a timely and predictable way will be critical to delivering the programme efficiently and maintaining essential services throughout the PC28 period.



Affordability and value for money

Affordability has been central to developing PC28. For customers, the Plan represents an average annual tariff increase of around 3% above inflation over the five-year period.

NI Water will continue to challenge investment, pursue efficiencies and make the best use of existing assets. This builds on significant efficiency improvements, with modelling indicating that the operating efficiency gap with leading industry peers has reduced from 49% to almost 2%.



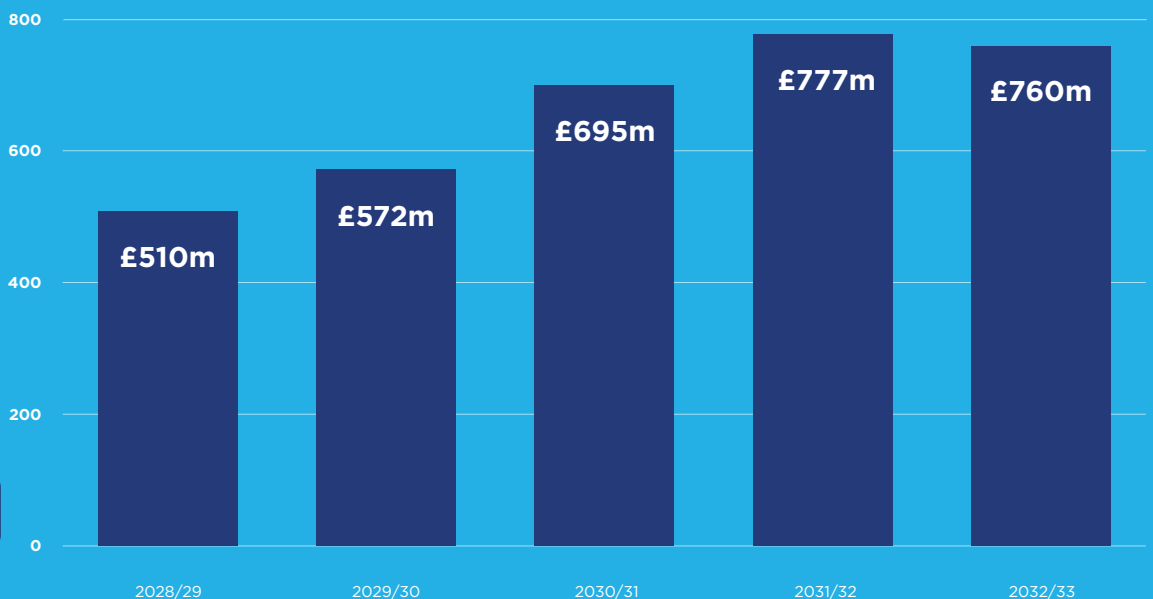
A deliverable programme

The scale of PC28 will require NI Water and its supply chain to increase delivery capacity and capability.

Timely and predictable funding will be critical, allowing investment to be planned, procured and sequenced efficiently. Delays or significant changes in funding could increase costs and reduce what can be delivered within the five-year period.

NI Water will also retain flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, emerging risks and new information.

Capital investment required in PC28



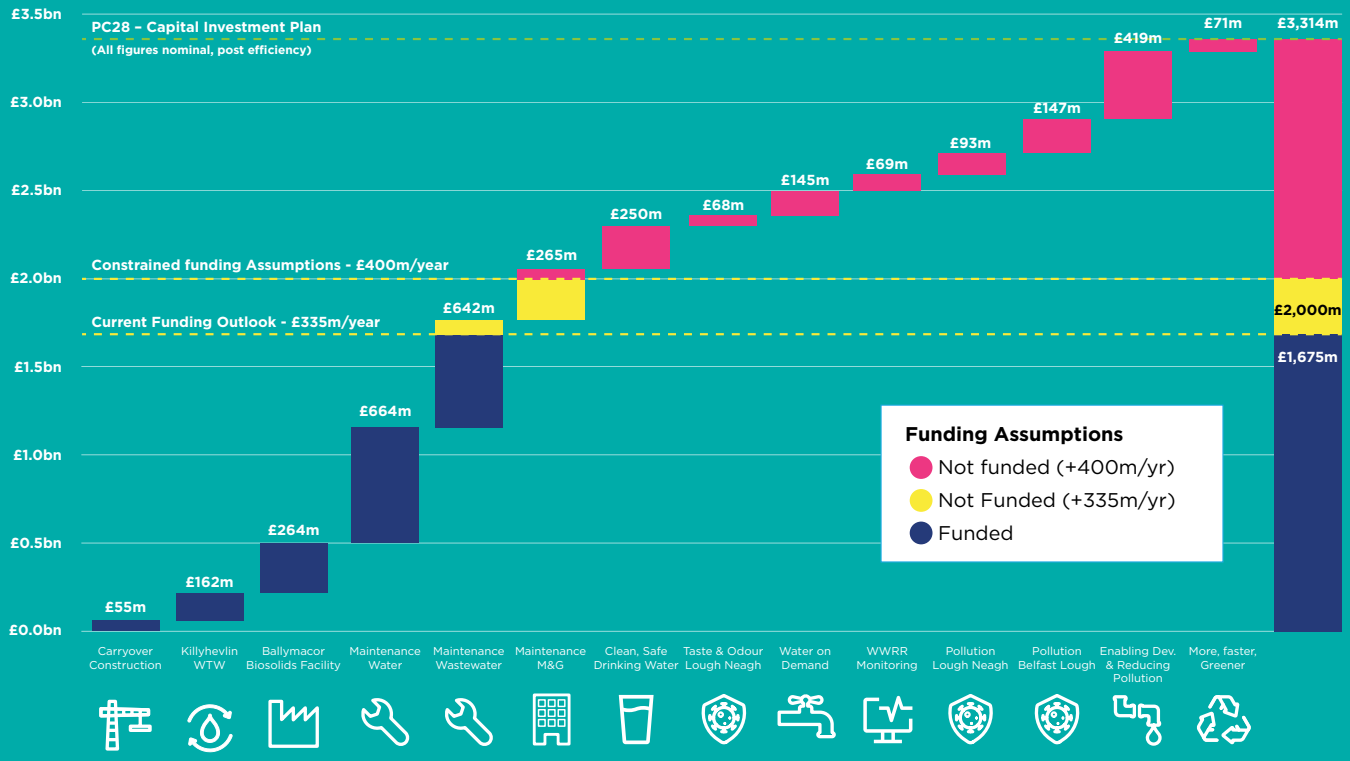
£3.3bn
(nominal prices)

Consequences of lower funding

Funding below the level required by PC28 would slow progress and increase risk.

To illustrate the consequences of lower funding, NI Water has assessed a more constrained capital funding scenario of around £400 million per year, around £1.3 billion below the overall capital investment considered necessary for PC28.

At this level, £1.6bn of investment would need to focus primarily on maintaining services and compliance. This leaves only around £0.4bn, out of £1.7bn needed in PC28, to invest in water, wastewater, the environment and growth.



Theme based outcomes - priority of Investment (highest priority Left - Lowest Priority Right)

Impact	Consequence
Essential water investment would be deferred	Investment in drinking water quality, security of supply and resilience would be reduced or delayed, increasing the risk of service disruption and limiting NI Water's ability to respond to increasing demand and changing environmental conditions.
Environmental improvement and support for growth would be slower	Fewer wastewater capacity constraints could be addressed, slowing progress on pollution reduction, environmental improvement and support for new housing and economic development.
Risks to existing services would increase	Deferring investment would increase the risk of asset failure, service disruption and emergency intervention, with the potential for higher costs where planned investment is replaced by more reactive solutions.
Statutory and regulatory obligations would be harder to meet	Lower investment would increase the risk of non-compliance and regulatory or environmental enforcement action.

Delivering what Northern Ireland needs

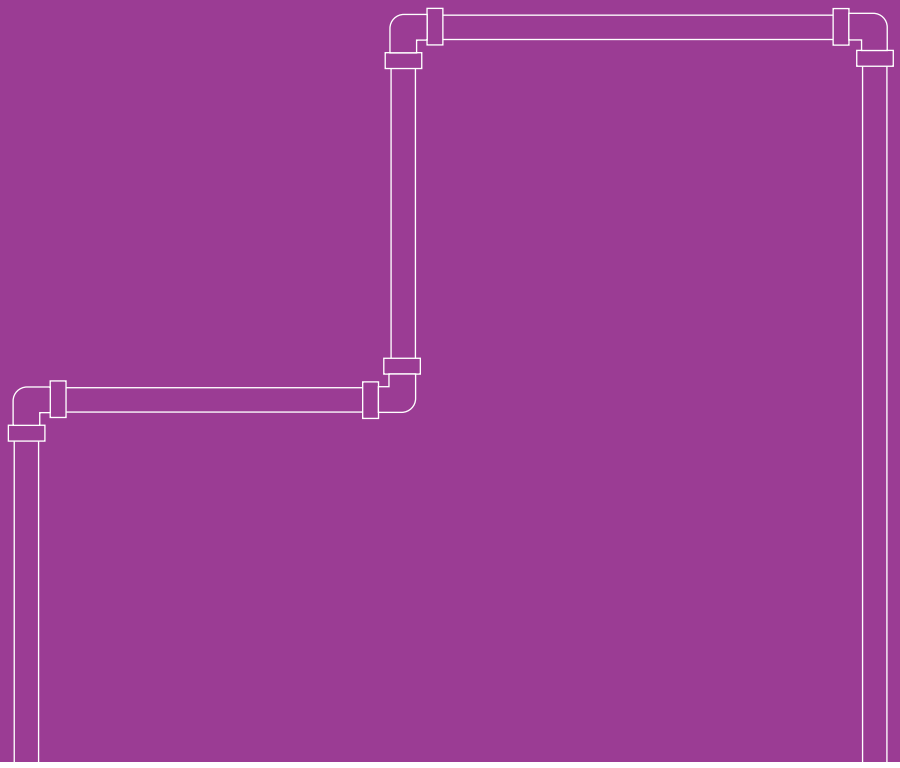
PC28 provides a clear route forward. It is a practical, deliverable programme focused on protecting essential services while making targeted progress on resilience, the environment and capacity for housing and economic growth.

It is an important step in a longer-term programme of investment and improvement. With timely and predictable funding, effective delivery and continued collaboration with government, regulators and partners, PC28 can provide a stronger foundation for Northern Ireland's future.

The detailed Business Plan sets out how NI Water will translate this ambition into delivery.

The detailed PC28 Business Plan is available to read at //www.niwater.com/PC28








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