

OUR STRATEGY FOR NI WATER



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Chairman's foreword

I am pleased to publish 'Our Strategy for NI Water'. This sets out our long term strategy for providing water and wastewater services to our customers in Northern Ireland.

This strategy supports our vision for NI Water to be a valued and trusted provider of one of Northern Ireland's most essential services; an organisation our customers and staff are proud of.

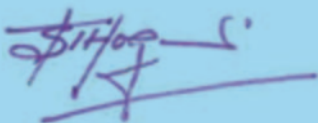
Everyone in Northern Ireland depends on high quality drinking water and the safe return of wastewater to the environment. We are very proud of the significant improvements we have made to your water and wastewater services over the past seven years since we were formed as a government-owned company. We are equally proud that this has been achieved while reducing the costs of these services.

As a prelude to our Business Plan for the 2015-2021 period, this document sets out what we believe to be the key challenges and opportunities facing the Northern Ireland water industry in the years to come. To ensure we are prepared to address these challenges and opportunities, we have outlined our long term objectives and priorities.

There are major uncertainties when trying to plan over such a long period of time. External factors, such as new legislation, changing weather patterns and advances in science and technology, will inevitably impact the way we conduct our business. A potential change in the future governance model for NI Water introduces additional uncertainty.

Our priorities and, in particular, what we plan to deliver in the next six years, have been informed by research and discussion with our customers and other key stakeholders.

I hope you will take the opportunity to read 'Our Strategy for NI Water' and share my view that we have put together a clear plan that is right for our customers and right for Northern Ireland.



Sean Hogan
Chairman

About NI Water



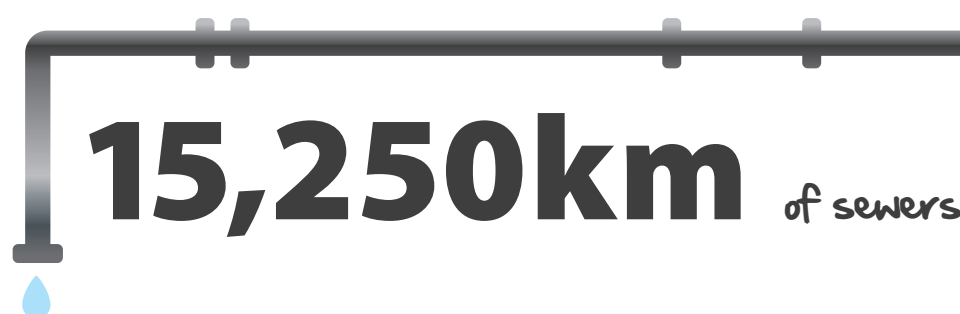
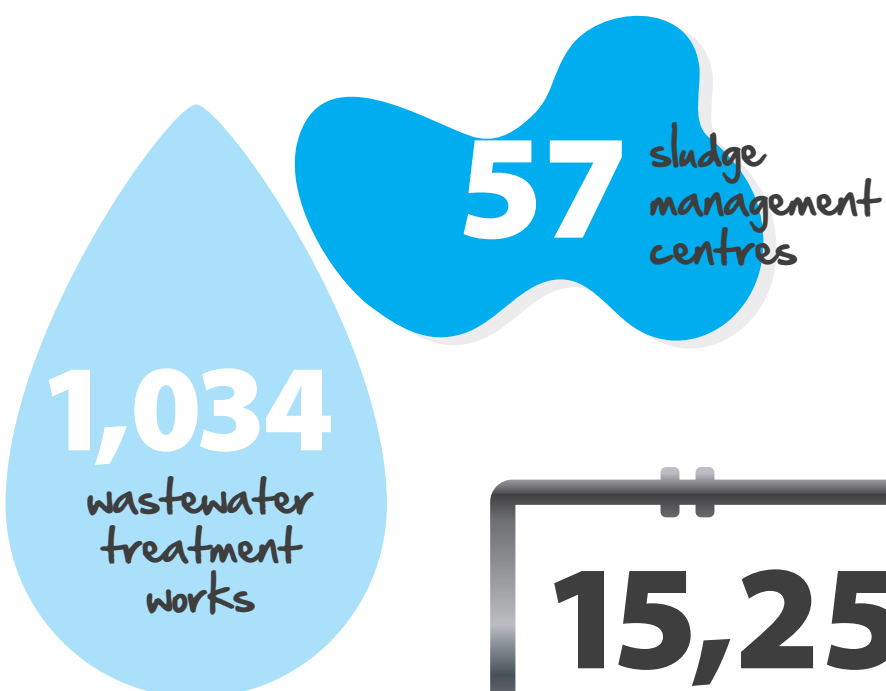
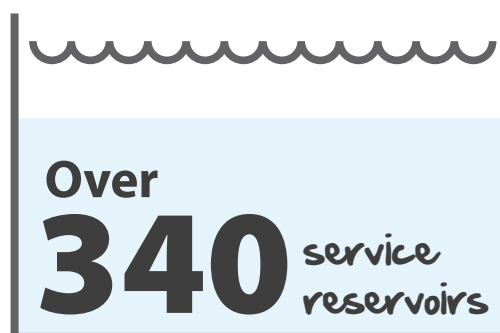
At a glance

Formed in 2007, NI Water is one of Northern Ireland's largest companies and is responsible for the delivery of water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland.

We deliver clean, safe drinking water to approximately 818,000 households and businesses. We supply customers with approximately 559 million litres of good quality drinking water every day.

We collect approximately 318 million litres of wastewater per day from around 663,000 households and organisations connected to the sewerage system and transfer it to a works where it is treated and disposed of safely.

Thousands of assets are operated and maintained to provide these services, including:



Industry structure

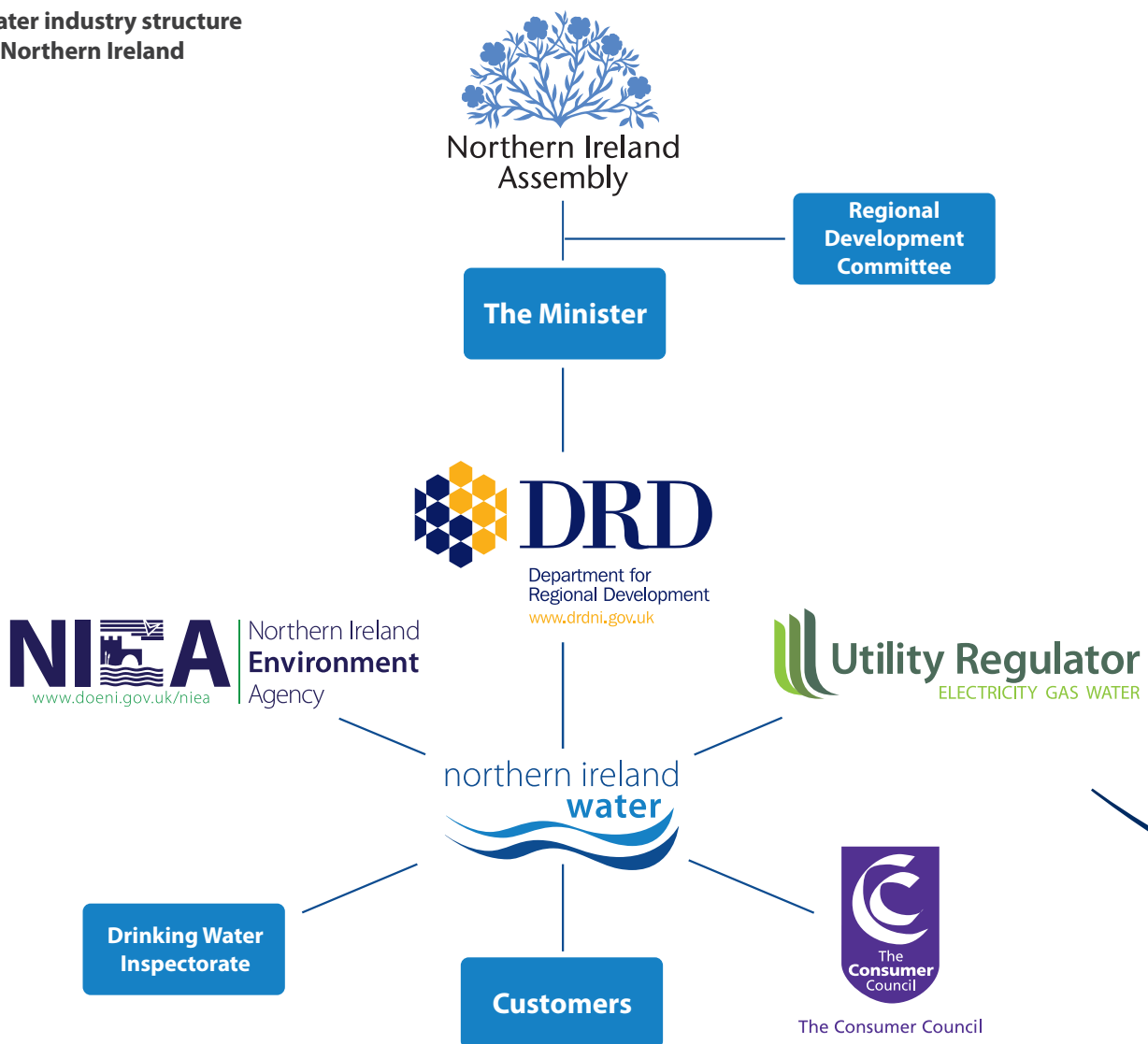
NI Water is one of more than twenty providers of water and sewerage services in the UK, with differing ownership models in place across the country. Providers in England are privately owned companies; Wales has a not-for-profit company; Scotland has a statutory corporation and Northern Ireland has a Government Owned Company (GoCo). The Department for Regional Development (DRD) is the company's sole shareholder.

The Northern Ireland Assembly has decided to defer the introduction of domestic water charges. Instead, NI Water receives funding by means of a subsidy provided by DRD. Due to the level of subsidy, NI Water is also designated as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and is subject to public sector spending rules.

As with all water and sewerage companies across the UK, NI Water is regulated. Regulators provide assurance that NI Water meets the interests of its customers, protects the quality of drinking water and the environment, and is accountable for its performance. The water industry structure in Northern Ireland is shown below.

It is recognised by stakeholders that the requirement for NI Water to operate both as a GoCo and an NDPB is sub-optimal. The NI Assembly is considering what changes might be made to the water industry in Northern Ireland to optimise performance and streamline governance.

Water industry structure in Northern Ireland



Our improving performance

Since NI Water was formed in 2007, we have steadily improved the quality of drinking water, levels of environmental compliance, the services we provide and the efficiency with which we operate.

Drinking water quality
has remained at
historically high levels

Wastewater compliance
is the highest ever in
Northern Ireland

Efficiency gap
We have halved the gap
with leading companies
in England and Wales

Customer service
The OPA* score has
more than doubled
from 98 to 198

We have
invested £1.5bn
in N. Ireland's water and
sewerage infrastructure
since our formation
in 2007

Pollution incidents
are at a record low

Figures above are based on audited performance for year ended 31st March 2013.

*Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) is a composite measure of a range of targets the Utility Regulator uses to monitor the level of service NI Water provides to its customers.

Water strategy and policy framework

DRD is responsible for setting the strategy and policy framework relating to water and wastewater services in Northern Ireland.

Long Term Water Strategy

A Long Term Water Strategy (LTWS) is currently under development by DRD and NI Water has contributed to the development process. The draft document has influenced the development of our own plan for the provision of water and wastewater services to 2040.

The draft LTWS has identified six high level aims:

- **To deliver safe, secure, sustainable supplies of drinking water to households, industry and agriculture;**
- **To manage flood risk to facilitate social, economic and environmental development;**
- **To protect and improve the quality of the aquatic environment;**
- **To provide affordable, reliable water and sewerage services that meet customer needs;**
- **To ensure sustainable, secure governance, funding and regulation of the water sector; and**
- **To manage our inland and coastal waters to support tourism, recreation and biodiversity.**

Social and Environmental Guidance

Complementary to the LTWS, DRD, as our shareholder, also provides shorter term direction to the company on objectives for each price control period. This short term direction comes in the form of Social and Environmental Guidance (S&EG). Through the S&EG, DRD seeks to set the parameters for affordable improvements in services and the promotion of a sustainable industry. The key strategic investment themes of the draft S&EG for PC15 (2015-2021) are summarised as:

Environmental improvement and compliance

- **maintain water and sewerage infrastructure;**
- **meet our legal obligations in relation to drinking water quality, wastewater quality, pollution prevention and control; and**
- **work in partnership with other agencies to provide the relevant input to joint flood risk management plans and solutions, and work towards separating stormwater from the sewerage system.**

Service delivery, improvement and affordability

- **provide efficient and cost effective services for customers and taxpayers;**
- **improve customer service levels and target key areas such as sewer flooding and interruptions to water supply; and**
- **manage and operate water and sewerage assets and estate to promote tourism, recreation and biodiversity.**

Sustainability and climate change

- **apply a catchment based approach to investment to reduce leakage, pollution incidents and energy consumption whilst facilitating future development and growth; and**
- **mitigate and adapt to climate change in all aspects of investment planning and decision making.**

Both the LTWS aims and the S&EG objectives are reflected within Our Strategy for NI Water.

Working with principal stakeholders

We are committed to working with principal stakeholders in the water and sewerage industry to secure a successful outcome for PC15.

Established stakeholder groups – the Water Stakeholder Steering Group (WSSG) and the Water Investment Coordination Group (WICG) – provided the forum for successful stakeholder involvement and cooperation in PC10 and PC13 price controls.

The work to develop a long term water strategy already provides a forum for stakeholders to develop objectives and outputs for PC15. The WSSG and the WICG will continue as the forum for stakeholder engagement specific to PC15 S&EG, environmental priorities, customer engagement and the balance of expenditure between different strands of investment.

Listening to our customers

Our company focus is 'prioritising customers'. Listening to our customers' views and building these into our plans is essential for us to ensure that our customers' needs are at the heart of our service delivery.

NI Water, in conjunction with the Consumer Council (CCNI), the Utility Regulator and the Department for Regional Development (DRD), has undertaken a comprehensive study to establish which service areas customers want NI Water to prioritise and improve in the future.

Findings from the research show that **most customers are satisfied with the service provided most of the time**. Customers simply expect the service to work. Provided it does, customers rarely think about water and sewerage services or how they are provided. In other words, customers expect their water and sewerage service to be resilient.

Research identified that **customers expect local service 'hot-spots' to be addressed**. Customers are more willing to prioritise investment to address local issues, such as supply interruptions and flooding which have a direct impact on daily life over environmental aspects of service such as quality of rivers.

Customers want strategic decision making preferring long-term solutions over short-term 'fixes'. Customers also requested more information from NI Water in order to inform the public of what they can and cannot dispose of in the sewerage system and to educate customers to reduce water wastage.

Specific customer feedback

Our customers currently receive a reliable service from NI Water most of the time. However, there are occasions when issues arise. In relation to specific areas for service improvement, research findings from both business and household customers show:

Internal sewer flooding - Internal sewer flooding is abhorrent for the householder and customers want NI Water to focus on improving services for those affected by internal sewer flooding. Those affected want a more proactive approach from NI Water at times of flooding to manage the situation and minimise the impact.

Supply interruptions - Research findings confirm that continuous water supply is crucial to both domestic and non-domestic customers alike. When interruptions occur, customers want to be kept informed of the cause of the problem, the extent of the interruption and when it will be rectified.

External sewer flooding - Customers continue to highly prioritise incidents of sewer flooding that are external to properties as these are unsightly and potentially hazardous to the public. Focus groups noted that a number of bodies share the responsibility to prevent and rectify damage caused by flooding. They expect those bodies to work together when flooding occurs.

Low water pressure - Customers recognise the impact that continual low pressure can have on both lifestyle and business operation and would like to see moderate investment to ensure sufficient levels of pressure.

Noise and odour - Noise and odour are recognised as localised issues affecting those living close to some treatment works. The challenge for NI Water is to identify and work towards addressing 'hot-spot' areas.

Sewer blockages - Customers requested improvements to reduce the number of sewer blockages. Research indicated that customers wished to be better educated about what they can/cannot dispose of in the sewerage system.

Taste, smell and appearance of water - Taste, smell and appearance of tap water is a very important aspect of service provision to customers and is regarded as a core function of NI Water. Although generally acceptable, there may be pockets of provision that do not currently meet customer expectations.

Pollution incidents - Both domestic and business customers expect NI Water to reduce pollution from its operations and processes.

Water abstraction – While customers understood the value of reducing levels of abstraction, research findings suggested it should be tackled by investing in the infrastructure, maintaining the network to reduce leakage, promoting better water efficiency and utilisation of natural resources.

Quality of river waters – While customers considered improvement to the quality of river waters is required, they recognised that pollution of rivers can stem from many sources, and queried the extent to which investment by NI Water would have any marked improvement on river water quality.

Quality of coastal waters - While the majority of customers requested improvements to coastal waters, they are much more willing to contribute towards aspects of service which have an immediate impact on the householder.

Customer service - Customers were also asked about customer service. Around one third of non-domestic customers believe that improvements are required to the customer service experience. In relation to non-domestic billing, 29% requested improvements to billing and invoicing processes. However, non-domestic customers are not willing to pay any extra to improve the customer service experience.

Customer education - Customers placed high priority on education in water efficiency and waste disposal. Feedback revealed that domestic and non-domestic customers tend to lack knowledge of the information and support materials available from NI Water in both areas.

NI Water's commitment

Our commitment to addressing these priorities forms the basis of, and runs throughout, this strategy. The detail of how the strategy will be delivered will be provided in the PC15 and subsequent business plans that will be drawn up, in consultation with stakeholders, for each price control throughout the period of this strategy.

As we move through the period of this strategy, customer views and priorities will alter. We shall, therefore, continue to not only monitor the delivery of our services but periodically undertake further comprehensive customer surveys. The results of these surveys will help us review this strategy and develop future business plans.

From our research, we understand that our customers:

- value water and sewerage services which are reliable and resilient;
- expect problems to be fixed quickly and to be kept informed of progress;
- wish to see investment to reduce flooding from sewer 'hot-spots';
- wish to see investment prioritised so that repeat interruptions to water supplies are identified and targeted;
- expect strategic improvements rather than short term fixes;
- want to know more about how to use water more efficiently and dispose of waste responsibly; and
- wish to see improvement of the customer service experience including accuracy of billing and invoicing processes.

What might the future bring?

In considering the key priorities for water and wastewater services in Northern Ireland, we need to understand the future opportunities and challenges we may face over the next 25 years. Some of these are external factors which may alter the services we deliver.

Climate change

Our water industry is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, in the form of water scarcity, flooding and more frequent extreme weather events. When planning for the future, we will consider how these changes might impact on our services and what we need to do to both adapt to changing climatic conditions and mitigate the impact of further changes in weather patterns by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

Legislation

It is anticipated that over the coming 25 years there will be new European, UK and Northern Ireland legislation aimed at improving drinking water and environmental standards and how we achieve them. We will continually monitor the introduction of new legislation and seek necessary funding to enable compliance with the legislation.

Our governance and funding and the regulatory environment

Under the current governance arrangements, the funding available to the company is limited both by the level of public expenditure allocated to NI Water from DRD and the price control determined by the Utility Regulator. It is reasonable to expect that the regulatory framework will evolve through the period of this plan and there are already debates over the future governance model for NI Water. The outcome of these debates has the potential to re-shape the company and further raise customer expectations of our performance.

Demographics

The 2011 census showed a continuation in the trend of increasing population in Northern Ireland. This is an important factor in our planning for the future provision of water and wastewater services. Shifts in the urban / rural split, periodic variances in economic activity and constantly changing business needs between water intensive industrial processes and the service sector, all impact on where, when and how much investment is needed to secure future water and wastewater services.

Innovation

The adoption of advanced science and technology in recent years has assisted us in delivering better quality services in more efficient ways. With ever increasing challenges on sustainability, efficiency and cost, we will continue to look to science and technology to seek innovative and practical sustainable solutions to improve our services and minimise costs.

Our Strategy

Our Vision

To be a valued and trusted provider of one of Northern Ireland's most essential services; an organisation our customers and staff are proud of.

To achieve our vision, we need a strategy which delivers a safe and reliable service that meets all our customer expectations at the best possible value for money. We believe that our strategy should focus on eight priorities.

As we set out our plans for each of the eight priorities it should be noted that 'Our priorities for 2021' have been constrained by the capital investment funding available under public expenditure.



We provide you with customer service you value and expect



We provide you with clean, safe water to drink



We seek to give you value for money



We adapt to deal with the effects of climate change



We want to protect and enhance the natural environment



We take care of your wastewater so it doesn't pollute your environment



We supply you with the water you need



We provide excellent service by having the right people doing the right thing for you



**We provide you with
customer service
you value and expect**

What our customers can expect in 2040

We will use proven and cost effective technology to improve the services provided to customers.

We will use a range of channels to communicate with customers which will evolve in line with changing social media trends and this will allow us to be as proactive as possible in communicating with customers.

We will have minimised the need for customers to contact us but when customers have a need to do so, they will have a choice of contact channels that meet their needs.

We will aim to resolve contacts at the first time of asking and reduce the need for repeat contacts.

We will continue to measure the services we provide and seek opportunities to continually improve and we will deliver customer satisfaction ratings that are equivalent to best in class benchmarks.

Our Goal

To provide a range of essential services and associated contact channels which meet the rising expectations of our customers.

NI Water has made significant progress in relation to customer measures since it was formed in 2007. We want our customers to be able to contact us using whichever media channel is convenient to them. We have redeveloped our website, developed a Smartphone app and have Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts to make it easier for customers to keep in contact with us. We fully appreciate that more can be done to deliver the standards of service our customers will expect in the future.

Customer contact

By improving the standard of service delivery and the accuracy of customer data we aim to reduce the number of complaints and the time taken to respond to complaints or enquiries. We will provide a range of options to facilitate customer contact.

Vulnerable customers

We aim to maintain an up-to-date Customer Care Register, ensuring that this reflects all of our customers who rely upon the additional free services we provide for those who require extra support, e.g. those with a disability, older customers or those with a serious medical condition.

Systems improvements

We aim to implement enhancements to the online facilities available to our customers, including the ability to access and update billing account details, make payments, request septic tank emptying and view up-to-date operational information via an interactive map.

Major Incident Plan (MIP)

We will continually review our MIP to ensure that in the event of a major incident, it enables us to provide a customer-focussed response and keep customers informed of progress in addressing the incident.

Metering and billing

Metering is a key part of the service we provide, enabling metered customers to monitor their water use and forming the basis by which customer bills are calculated. We aim to achieve greater accuracy in our measured bills, with 99% based on actual meter reads, to give confidence to customers and better assist them in managing the efficiency of water use.

Customer satisfaction

Measuring customer satisfaction is a crucial part of informing how we should improve our services. We will continue to work with our stakeholders to review levels of customer satisfaction and seek to improve our processes and deliver value for money services in line with what our customers tell us.

Our priorities to 2021

Expand and develop the range of ways customers can contact us.

Develop targets and measure how often we solve issues on first contact and, if we are unable to do so, we will keep customers informed about progress via their choice of available contact methods.

Measure how many repeat issues we receive, examine why we failed, and make process and system changes to continue to improve.

Measure and publish levels of customer satisfaction.

Continue to improve the accuracy of customer data to ensure the completeness of customer billing.



**We provide you with
clean, safe water to drink**



What our customers can expect in 2040

We will continue to provide high quality water for the protection of public health which complies with statutory standards and obligations.

We will have well developed Drinking Water Safety Plans which identify risks to drinking water quality and address the risks through focused investment.

We will have invested in the latest technology to monitor our asset performance. This will include real time automated monitoring of water quality allowing us to identify and rectify problems before service is affected.

We will move from reactive to proactive asset maintenance seeking to maintain our assets before failures affect customers.

We will have removed all lead pipes from the NI Water system and will be continuing to work with stakeholders to manage the remaining lead pipes in customers' properties.

Our Goal

To provide complete confidence to our customers in the safety and quality of their drinking water.

As a public health utility, NI Water's principal responsibility is to provide a safe and reliable drinking water supply to all our customers. Since 2007 significant investment has resulted in improved drinking water quality and a reduction in lead exceedances. We are committed to continuing investment to meet rising quality standards and minimise risks.

Water quality compliance

We will provide safe, high quality drinking water for our customers by carefully operating and maintaining our assets and continually testing the quality of the water we produce.

Drinking Water Safety Plans

Our Drinking Water Safety Plans will continue to provide a risk-based approach to managing our operations from 'source to tap'. We will use these plans to identify and prioritise activities to deliver water of the highest quality to our customers. We will increasingly move towards proactive risk identification to prevent water quality events including protecting water treatment processes from the impact of changing weather patterns.

Lead management

The standard for lead compliance measured at the customer's tap has recently tightened. We will work with other stakeholders in Northern Ireland to develop a joined up approach to reduce lead in the drinking water supply network, while continuing to minimise the risk posed by the lead pipework that remains.

Customer satisfaction

We will reduce customer complaints for discolouration and water quality. Discolouration can arise when we carry out essential maintenance work or from the condition of old iron mains within our supply network. We will use our customer contacts to help target investment and employ operational best practise to minimise the frequency of discolouration events. We will continue to work closely with CCNI and other key stakeholders in dealing with complaints about water quality.

Our priorities to 2021

Continue to provide high quality water which complies with statutory standards and obligations.

Address pockets of our water distribution network that do not currently meet customer expectations in relation to taste, smell and appearance.

Reduce customer contacts regarding water quality.

Implement all Drinking Water Safety Plans.

Develop and agree with stakeholders a joined up approach to the removal and management of lead in public and private water supply systems.



We seek to give you value for money

Image courtesy of Alan Lavery Photography
www.alanlaveryphotography.com

What our customers can expect in 2040

We will be delivering services that customers consider affordable and offer excellent value for money.

We will have embraced innovation and new technology to improve the services we deliver and further reduce our costs.

Our business efficiency will be on a par with the performance of the better performing water and sewerage companies in Great Britain.

We will be offering a range of tariffs which are capable of being adapted to reflect the activities of our customers.

We will have transparent billing with a range of payment options to suit our customers.

Our Goal

To deliver services which our customers consider to be affordable and offer excellent value for money. We want our bills to compare favourably with equivalent companies in England and Wales.

Since 2007, NI Water has delivered significant improvements to water and wastewater services. We have reduced operating costs and improved comparative efficiency with water and sewerage companies in England and Wales while doubling the Overall Performance Assessment score which measures the service that NI Water provides to its customers. We plan to continue to build on these achievements and further reduce costs while improving services.

Efficient delivery of services

While good progress has been made there remain further opportunities to improve the efficiency of our services. We will continue to improve our processes and take advantage of new technology and innovation to achieve better value; we will invest in our assets to allow longer term efficiencies to be realised. Opportunities include:

Capital Efficiency – in PC15 we will be investing approximately £990m to maintain and improve our assets. We aim to ensure that NI Water delivers as many outputs as we can with as much value to our customers and stakeholders as possible.

Energy costs – we use around £34 million of electricity per year in delivering our services, particularly at our treatment works and in pumping water and wastewater through our pipe networks. Our climate change mitigation action plan aims to invest in energy conservation / reduction measures, e.g. replacement of inefficient pumps.

New technology – we continue to deliver operational process improvements by embracing new technology. For example, we have recently installed a situational awareness tool. This allows us to identify where customers are calling from, link those calls to our assets and enables a quicker response to network problems. We have commenced the 'Future Organisational Model' project to consider the best structure for our organisation as we move forward.

Research and development - we are working with a number of organisations in pursuit of ever more efficient and sustainable solutions to the treatment of water and wastewater and the delivery of services. A number of innovative approaches have already been piloted or adopted and we will continue to seek opportunities to adopt cost effective innovative sustainable solutions.

Stable bills

To the extent that it is within our control, we will aim to ensure that future bill increases should not exceed general inflation. However, we acknowledge that this may depend on factors outside of our control, for example, changes to local authority rates, changes to the tax regime or the impact of further European environmental requirements.

Customer billing

For those customers that we bill, we aim to provide easy to understand, transparent, accurate billing and consumption data, with a range of payment options to suit the diverse needs of our customers.

Our priorities to 2021

Continue to reduce our costs across all areas of our business to close the efficiency gap to the England and Wales comparator companies.

Keep customer bills stable in real terms.

Improve our Overall Performance Assessment to highest levels ever demonstrating improving levels of service.





**We adapt to deal
with the effects
of climate change**

What our customers can expect in 2040

We will have carefully developed our asset base to be resilient to the challenges presented by increasingly extreme weather events.

Our greenhouse gas emissions will have steadily reduced from current levels. We will do this through the successful implementation of a number of strategies to reduce usage of fossil fuels, increase utilisation of 'green energy', and reduce emission of greenhouse gases (such as methane and nitrous oxide) from treatment processes and sludge.

Our land and assets, and the wastewater that we collect and treat, will be used to generate renewable energy in all locations where it is economically viable.

The nutrients in the wastewater that we collect and treat will be utilised to assist Northern Ireland's agricultural industry to increase food security and to grow renewable energy crops.

Our Goal

We will adapt our activities to deal with the potential consequences of climate change while substantially mitigating our own 'carbon footprint'.

NI Water in recent years has had to deal with extreme swings in weather conditions, from the flooding in Fermanagh in November 2009, to near drought conditions in June 2010, followed by the freeze/thaw in the winter of 2010/11. We are fully committed to playing our part in preparing for the impacts of climate change.

Planning

We have already started preparing the business for the challenges posed by climate change. Our 'Climate Change Forum' coordinates our approach to climate change including identification of investment requirements. It has two aims:

Adaptation – to maintain services to customers during unavoidable events.

Mitigation – to reduce our emissions to help reduce the effect of climate change in the future.

NI Water is a member of the Climate Northern Ireland steering group. Climate Northern Ireland is an inter-sectorial network devoted to increasing understanding of climate change impacts and risks within Northern Ireland and promoting the adaptation actions necessary to address these.

Adaptation

We will maintain and protect essential services to customers by adapting to the negative impacts, while taking advantage of any benefits that a changing climate may bring. We are looking to adapt our assets and operations to ensure that our services can always be delivered, irrespective of the effects of a changing climate.

Mitigation

We will reduce the production of climate change gases from our operations and become more energy efficient through the following:

- use less energy
- use renewable energy
- reduce other GHG Emissions.

As one of the largest users of electricity in Northern Ireland, we are committed to limiting our impact on the environment. NI Water expects to increase its electricity consumption from renewable sources from currently around 13% to 40% in 2020/21. To maintain our accreditation under the Carbon Trust Standard, we are required to measure our carbon footprint, meet an absolute reduction in emissions and demonstrate our carbon is managed appropriately.

Our priorities to 2021

Invest in our key water and wastewater treatment works and other critical sites to improve flood resilience.

Develop a programme which continues to work towards separating stormwater from the sewerage system.

Invest in energy conservation / reduction measures with a particular focus on the larger energy consuming facilities.

Expand our use of sustainable wastewater treatment solutions which protect the environment, improve carbon efficiency and reduce operating costs.

Reduce our carbon footprint.

Explore options to use renewable energy on our sites.



We want to protect and enhance the natural environment



What our customers can expect in 2040

We will be providing our essential services in a way that is sustainable for the natural environment and takes into consideration the needs of the environment as the weather and seasons change.

Our land will be carefully managed to maximise the benefit that a healthy ecosystem provides to raw water supplies and to maintain biodiversity.

Our assets will be carefully operated and proactively maintained in a way that minimises potentially damaging discharges to the environment.

Customer educational campaigns will have successfully influenced:

- the efficient usage of water, so that the abstraction of water from the environment for treatment and supply can be reduced; and
- disposal of inappropriate materials into the sewerage networks, so that there are less blockages, spills and discharges that impact upon the environment.

Through sustained investment, NI Water will have achieved 'good ecological status' or 'good ecological potential' under EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) where this is technically possible and does not involve excessive cost.

We will have made appropriate investment to play our part in assisting Northern Ireland's designated EU Bathing Waters achieve the excellent bathing water standard.

Our Goal

Our goal is to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to provide NI Water's essential services to customers in a way that is sustainable for our natural environment.

Northern Ireland is an area rich in natural beauty and we want to play our part in keeping it this way. This will only be achieved through new and innovative approaches being used, by developing the evidence base for change and further investment, by skilful analysis, appraisal and investment planning, and by working to develop 'shared solutions', for which there will be multiple contributors and benefactors.

Working with a number of other stakeholders NI Water has developed a SCAMP NI (Sustainable Catchment Management Planning NI) strategy to improve the quality and reliability of the water received at NI Water's raw water abstraction points through sustainable catchment based solutions which focus on protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

The Water Framework Directive

NI Water will implement the applicable parts of the WFD through a capital works programme to upgrade wastewater treatment works and sewerage networks. NI Water will continue to support NIEA in the development of pollution source apportionment and simulated catchment management models that will assist in definition of the programme of measures that will be applicable from 2015.

Pollution prevention strategy

Thirty one of our wastewater treatment works fall under the Pollution Prevention and Control legislation. We recognise odour can affect our customers living close to some of these works. We will focus on investing to comply with odour conditions for each site.

Revised Bathing Waters Directive (rBWD)

NI Water is progressing a number of detailed appraisals to determine how best to play our part with other agencies such that Northern Ireland's designated Bathing Waters achieve the excellent bathing water standard under the rBWD.

Piloting sustainable solutions

NI Water is progressing a number of sustainable wastewater treatment pilot projects that will allow costs to be reduced whilst enhancing their surrounding natural environment. These will inform expansion of the use of this approach in the PC15 period.

Our priorities to 2021

Complete a Catchment Management Plan for each catchment and further extend the range of work being undertaken by the SCAMP NI programme.

Further progress all actions in NI Water's Pollution Reduction Strategy.

Complete delivery of the improvements recommended through the asset management planning capability assessment carried out in late 2013.

For the 2015 WFD Programme of Measures, deliver those actions assigned to NI Water where they have been prioritised by stakeholders and are funded.

Complete the appraisals and business cases necessary to secure the investment to achieve compliance with the rBWD.

Gradually deliver year on year increases in the percentage of investment in wastewater treatment works delivered by 'more sustainable solutions'.



**We take care of your
wastewater so it doesn't
pollute your environment**



What our customers can expect in 2040

Properties confirmed to be at risk of internal flooding from sewers are placed on an at-risk register. Where a financially viable solution can be developed, properties will be removed from the register within two years.

Customer educational campaigns will have successfully influenced a reduction in the number of sewer blockages.

We will have delivered a year-on-year reduction in the amount of stormwater that enters the sewerage system by promoting stormwater separation, infiltration reduction and use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

NI Water will have targeted capital investment and operational interventions to reduce flood risk and to protect the aquatic environment from pollution.

We will move from reactive to proactive asset maintenance seeking to intervene and maintain our assets before failures affect customer service.

NI Water will be continuing to work with all relevant agencies to not only provide a multi-agency response to flooding incidents but to reduce the causes of flooding, including the delivery of shared and jointly funded capital projects.

NI Water will have invested to increase the resilience of all key pumping stations from flood water, allowing them to remain operational to minimise flooding and pollution.

Our Goal

We are committed to reducing pollution incidents and will work with stakeholders to play our part in reducing flooding which we recognise causes distress and inconvenience.

A consequence of development has been an increase in the areas where surface water, which previously percolated into the soil, enters the combined sewer network, straining the capacity of many sewerage systems and increasing the frequency of flooding from sewers. Through our Surface Water Management Strategy we will work in cooperation with stakeholders to develop and implement more integrated drainage solutions to reduce internal flooding of property and pollution incidents.

Pollution from sewers

We are committed to reducing pollution incidents. We will achieve this through the following activities:

- sustainable urban drainage solutions;
- stormwater separation;
- infiltration reduction;

- reduction of misconnections; and
- inter-agency Flood Investment Group.

Investment to prevent flooding and pollution

Our Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan has informed the development and implementation of a wide range of activities from proactive sewer de-silting to focused customer education campaigns. Investment to address flooding and unsatisfactory intermittent discharges from sewer networks will continue.

Communication

We will continue to review and develop our customer communication channels to ensure customers are kept informed during flooding incidents.

Education

Blocked sewers are a contributor to flooding incidents. Approximately 80% of blockages are the result of inappropriate materials in the sewerage system. We will therefore maintain our educational programmes and tailor them as is appropriate to reduce the number of sewer blockages.

Our priorities to 2021

Prioritise investment to address issues in the sewerage system which lead to flooding from sewers.

Investigate opportunities to increase stormwater separation and reduce infiltration.

Increase the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Solutions.

Investigate areas of known or suspected stormwater sewer misconnections and consider options for, and implement, their removal.

Further progress all actions in NI Water's Pollution Reduction Strategy.

Deliver customer education campaign to reduce sewer blockages.

Contribute to the development of the NI Executive's Flood Risk Management Plans (2015-21) to reduce flood risk and support the Water Framework Directive.

Undertake a focused programme of repair and renewal in relation to gravity sewers, CSO structures, pumping stations and syphons.





**We supply you with the
water you need**

What our customers can expect in 2040

We will have a secure, resilient water supply network that will provide protection against drought and emergency situations.

We will be continuing to manage leakage at an economic and sustainable level.

We will have made appropriate sustainable investment in both water and wastewater assets to ensure customers have unconstrained access to our services enabling economic development.

We will own and operate the assets currently operated through Public Private Partnership contracts.

We will be using a catchment area approach to the assessment and management of risks to water sources.

Our Goal

We will develop a sustainable, robust and resilient water treatment and supply system that provides protection against drought and emergency situations. We will work with development agencies, planners and others to ensure supply of services is in place to facilitate the demands of economic growth and sustain demographic change.

NI Water has completed a significant investment programme resulting in increased 'security of supply' across our network. Our leakage programme has also delivered substantial leakage reductions across the distribution network. Sustained investment in the wastewater system since 2007 has eased development constraints in a number of towns and villages across Northern Ireland. We are committed to continuing this progress.

Interruptions to supply

NI Water recognises the inconvenience caused when customers' water supply is interrupted. We will continue to identify and address areas where there is a risk of repeat interruptions to supply. We will reduce the impact to customers of planned interruptions by minimising the notified time period based on the complexity of the connection.

Infrastructure investment

NI Water will continue to identify the investment needed to continue to balance its supply and demand and plan this in a manner that allows economic growth and demographic change.

Water Resource and Supply Resilience Planning

NI Water, working with key stakeholders, will develop and implement a new holistic approach to assessing water resource and supply and demand needs to ensure a sustainable resilient service.

Manage leakage

NI Water will continually manage water loss towards the most sustainable level for Northern Ireland, and will go beyond this if lowering leakage levels is a more cost effective option to meet customer demand.

Abstraction licences

NI Water will work with NIEA and other stakeholders to review abstraction licences with a view to potential rationalisation and alignment with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive. With the new licenses in place we will review how water is drawn from the environment to ensure this is done in a manner that is sustainable, cost efficient and resilient.

Low pressure

We recognise the impact that low water pressure can have on our customers. We will continue to address localised areas to ensure sufficient levels of pressure.

Our priorities to 2021

Invest to improve our ability to transfer water from one area to another, remove bottlenecks and increase storage capacity.

Through effective monitoring, detection, repair and capital investment we will deliver leakage targets.

We will work with NIEA to develop and adopt a new abstraction license regime that aligns with the WFD.

NI Water aims to publish the Water Resource and Supply Resilience Plan in 2017. This will provide a resilient, sustainable and efficient vision and inform the PC21 Business Plan.

Continue to identify and address areas where there is a risk of repeat interruptions to supply.

Deliver customer education campaign to promote water efficiency.

Continue to identify and address areas experiencing low pressure.

Invest available funding to minimise constraints in development caused by lack of capacity at wastewater treatment works and in sewerage networks.



We provide excellent service by having the right people doing the right thing for you



What our customers can expect in 2040

Staff delivering water and wastewater services will have strong technical and scientific skills consistent with the use of new technology.

We will be recognised as a local employer of choice and attract and retain the best talent available across all business areas enabling us to provide quality services to our customers.

Technology and processes will be in place to support our customers' requirements and all staff will be equipped to deliver great customer service.

Results from staff surveys will be 'best in class' and confirm NI Water is a great place to work.

We will have maintained sector leading performance in health and safety and our zero accident ambition.

Employee volunteering schemes and other local initiatives will be recognised as benefitting our local communities and the professional development of our staff.

Our Goal

As we continue to transform our business, we will focus on equipping all our staff to deliver the high quality of services that our customers expect.

Skilled and committed staff are critical to the delivery of excellent service to our customers and the achievement of our vision and objectives. We must ensure that we create the right environment and culture to attract and retain the best people for our business. Staff involved in our Cares Challenge programme have benefitted a diverse range of groups and built great community relations. NI Water has been awarded ROSPA Gold Award for Health and Safety for the third time in recognition of our Health and Safety culture. We continue to work towards our zero accident ambition.

Business improvement

We have commenced the 'Future Organisational Model' project to consider the best structure for our organisation as we move forward. Through reviewing our business processes and current operating model we will streamline the way we do business providing improved service to customers at reduced cost.

Staff development

We will continually develop our staff to ensure that we deliver the best possible level of customer service. We will identify critical roles and develop programmes aligned to minimising the impact on the business, along with recruitment of apprentices and graduates to fill any additional gaps.

Our business transformation programme will provide personal development opportunities for staff needed to support the business as we move forward.

Health and safety

Our Strategic Health Group will continue to work alongside our expert partners and provide effective support for staff as we continue to work towards our zero accident ambition. We will continue to provide guidance and support to employees who wish to proactively manage their health and wellbeing.

Manpower planning

We will apply best manpower planning principles and practices to ensure we have the best people in the right place at the right time. We will become a high performing business with our staff demonstrating they possess the required core competencies and values. Where vacancies exist, we will recruit the best candidates internally or externally and establish ourselves as an employer of choice. We will become a sustainable business by lowering the average age of our workforce and provide equality of opportunities for all.

Our priorities to 2021

Improving the customer focus of all our activities so we excel in customer service and meet the needs of our customers.

Implement the Future Organisational Model and manpower planning exercise.

Support staff through continued business transformation which will require enhanced IT skills and changes to working practices.

Review our partners and contract service providers to ensure we are delivering services that represent value for money for our customers.

Continue to develop the skills of our staff through a range of development programmes that are targeted to enhance personal performance.

Maintain a healthy pipeline of apprenticeships which supports knowledge transfer in key functions and roles.

Maintain health and safety and wellbeing improvements, minimising impact on staff and work with all key service providers to deliver



Our wider role in the community



As a public health utility, the provider of one of Northern Ireland's most essential services and one of the largest employers in Northern Ireland, we are very aware of the wider role we play in our communities.



We are committed to contributing to the economic development of Northern Ireland and to producing a cleaner environment while improving the quality of life of our workforce and the local community. As our activities touch the lives of everyone in Northern Ireland, it is important that we behave ethically in all areas of our business, provide education on the value of water and water efficiency and maintain the highest standards of financial and business governance.

Corporate governance: Under our governance structure, our financial and business activities are closely monitored and audited by a range of internal and external bodies. We will continue to rigorously pursue the highest standards of corporate governance, ethically managing our finances and business risks.

Education programme: The PC15 customer survey highlighted the desire our customers have to learn more about the efficient use of water and other related issues. In recent years we have mounted a number of campaigns

to educate customers such as the efficient use of water, what may be put into the sewerage system and preparations for winter. We will continue to provide information, guidance and educational resources to customers and community groups.

Care of vulnerable customers: Customers on our Customer Care Register have benefited from a range of free additional services which are particularly valuable during times of supply interruption. We are committed to maintaining this register which will be continually reviewed to ensure it is as accurate as possible and that as many eligible customers as possible are listed on it.

Supporting local communities: NI Water staff have a tradition of voluntary service and charitable giving. The company is committed to continuing its support for staff through the Employer Supported Volunteer scheme and other initiatives as we recognise the benefit of such activities to communities and in the professional development of staff.

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