

Strong performance and roadmap for the future

Wessex Water maintained a strong performance in the first six months of this year despite the continued impact of Covid-19 on customers, communities and businesses across our region.

In recent months there has been much media coverage of storm overflows and the impact on rivers and beaches. Storm overflows are not new, they have always been part of the UK sewerage network because the majority of the system was built with combined sewers to carry both foul sewage and surface drainage. Overflows were part of the design to prevent flooding of properties and gardens during times of very heavy rainfall.

Across the Wessex Water region there are only eight water bodies out of a total of 444, where failure to meet environmental standards is in part due to the impact of storm overflows.

Chief Executive Colin Skellett said: “We fully support the proposed provisions within the Environment Bill that will require companies to progressively eliminate any harm from storm overflows. We already have a programme of work during this regulatory period and will be bidding for additional funding as part of our PR24 submission.

“Wherever possible, we will use nature-based solutions to solve storm overflows problems. This is part of a wider approach to minimise our carbon footprint.”

In advance of COP26, Wessex Water published its [routemap to net zero](#) with a commitment and plan to achieve net zero operational carbon emissions by 2030 and full net zero total emissions by 2040.

“Our vision is to be recognised as a leader in environmental stewardship, but to do this we need our regulators to help us unlock solutions that will enable society to pay less for more environmental improvements, added Mr Skellett.”

Working with Frontier Economics we have set out proposals for a move to outcome based environmental regulation, which we hope government and regulators will embrace as part of the next periodic review.

Innovation is a key part of driving even better customer service and improved environmental outcomes. We have launched a range of initiatives, including the roll out of artificial intelligence across our sewer network, the use of shading balls to prevent algal growth at Didmartin Water Recycling Centre and the creation of a wetland at Cromhall works, which avoids the use of expensive and carbon intense chemical treatment in removing phosphorus from sewage effluent.

Mr Skellett said: “Our people are the key to our success, so I am delighted by the continued growth of our apprenticeship and trainee programmes. This year we have more than 100 young people taking part in our apprenticeship, graduate, work experience and work placement programmes; and for the first time, we have also

created 45 new work placements targeted at young people at risk of long term unemployment, in support of the government's Kickstart Initiative.

"Our continued successful delivery during these challenging times gives me confidence that we will be able to meet the even greater challenges that lie ahead."

Financial results for the six months to September 2021 showed turnover increased by £5.6m from £254.3m to £259.9m, while profit after taxation fell from £33.0m to a loss after taxation of £67.8m.