



South Staffordshire Water PLC

Looking to the future

Our long-term vision to 2050

Securing your water future



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# A joint welcome from our Chair and Managing Director

Welcome to our long-term vision for the services you receive from us. We hope you enjoy reading about some of the ideas we're exploring to ensure you always receive water of the highest quality and a seamless customer experience, at an affordable price.

As the provider of clean water supplies across our Cambridge Water and South Staffs Water supply areas for nearly 170 years, we've always taken a long-term approach to successful business planning. As well as providing security to our customers and investors, we think this approach also helps to build trust and confidence in us and in the work we do.

But we're facing a number of significant challenges that mean the future is looking much more uncertain. As a result, we have to place a greater emphasis on planning for that future than we may have done in the past. Things like climate change, population growth, changing customer expectations and the current cost of living crisis all mean we need to be able to adapt quickly and flexibly to changing circumstances.

To help us deliver our long-term vision, we've developed a number of ambitions – for the services we deliver, to protect the environment, for our customers and communities, and for our

business. The aim of these ambitions is to demonstrate our value to you as the provider of an essential public service. In the pages that follow, we briefly describe how we're planning to deliver each of these ambitions – and, in turn, how this will help us to secure your long-term water future.

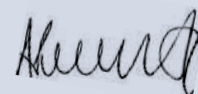
Over the next year or so, we'll be sharing more detail about how we intend to deliver our long-term vision through our business plan for 2025 to 2030, our long-term delivery strategy and our long-term plans for water resources in our Cambridge and South Staffs regions. The timeline on page 20 outlines some of the timings for when we're likely to share more information with you.

As the current custodians of this plan, we'll review it regularly. If you've got any ideas you'd like to share, or there's anything else you think we should also be doing, then please get in touch using the contact details at the end of this document. We'd love to hear from you.

**Lord Chris Smith**  
Chair



**Andy Willicott**  
Managing Director



Lord Chris Smith – Chair



Andy Willicott – Managing Director

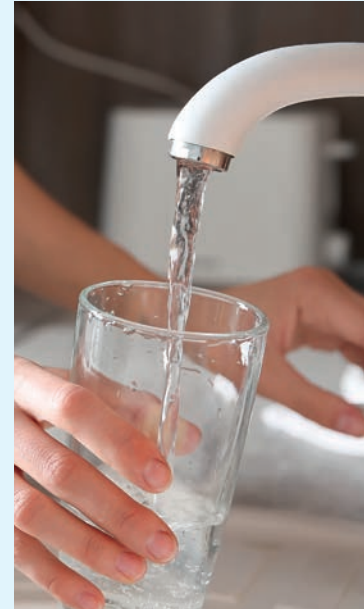
# About South Staffordshire Water PLC

**We operate  
Cambridge Water  
and South Staffs  
Water**



**We are part of the South  
Staffordshire Plc group of  
companies**

**We are a water only  
company, and do not  
take away and treat  
waste water**



**We have been a successful,  
privately-run business for nearly  
170 years**

**We are regulated  
by Ofwat, the  
Environment  
Agency and the  
Drinking Water  
Inspectorate**



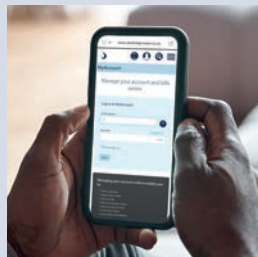
**We provide clean water to more than 1.7 million  
people and 42,500 businesses every day**

# Our vision to 2050

We have an ambitious, long-term vision for our business that aims to demonstrate our value to our customers and society, and our commitment to protecting and enhancing the environment. To deliver this vision, we are focusing on the following themes.

## Ending water poverty

This means keeping bills affordable, using smart data to identify customers who may be struggling to pay their bills, and offering the right levels of help and support to all customers who need it.



## Protecting and enhancing the environment

This means taking less water from the environment, including the rare chalk stream habitats in our Cambridge region. It also means working with farmers and landowners to improve water quality, and creating or enhancing habitats that support a wide range of plants and wildlife.

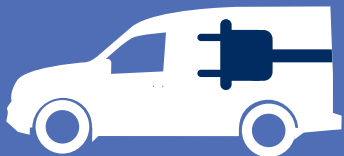
## Adapting to a changing climate

This means encouraging sustainable practices within our business and our supply chain. It includes using renewable energy, having a fully electric vehicle fleet, and making sure our network of treatment works, pipes and pumping stations can withstand extreme weather events.



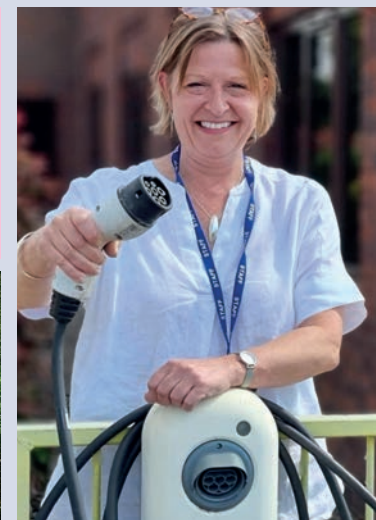
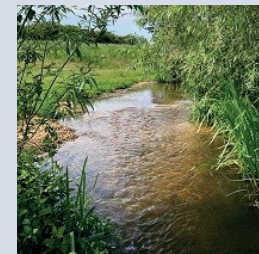
## Meeting the needs of a growing population

This means developing new water sources, such as the Fens reservoir with Anglian Water in our Cambridge region. It also means making the most of our existing water sources and working with developers to encourage more water efficiency, such as water recycling in every home.



## Remaining financeable over the long term

This means taking more advantage of green or sustainable financing initiatives, while continuing to always meet our regulatory and financial obligations.



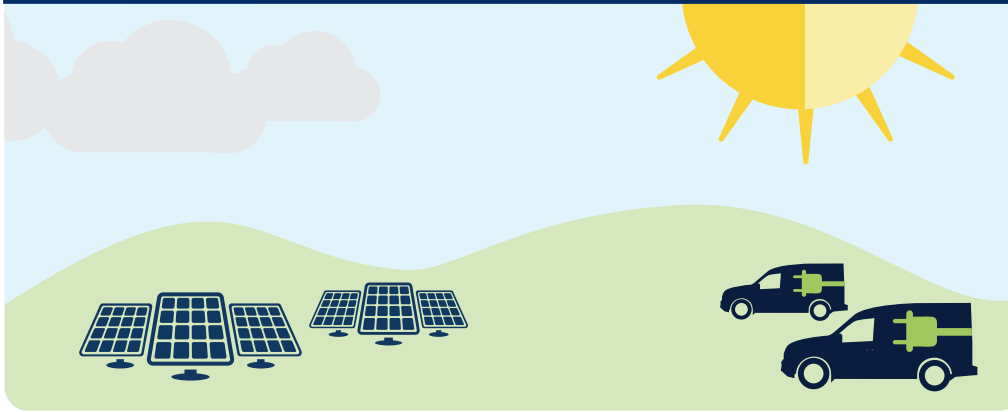
At the same time, we will take into account the changing expectations of our customers and regulators over time. This could mean placing more emphasis on one theme over another to reflect a change in circumstances, for example. Key to this remains the need for us to understand fully our customers' priorities, and to be fully embedded at the heart of all the communities we serve.

Looking to the future  
Our long-term vision to 2050

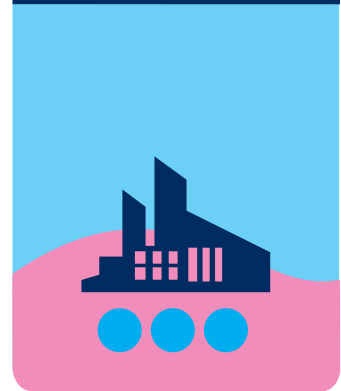
Securing resilient water supplies



Using renewable energy to power our operations

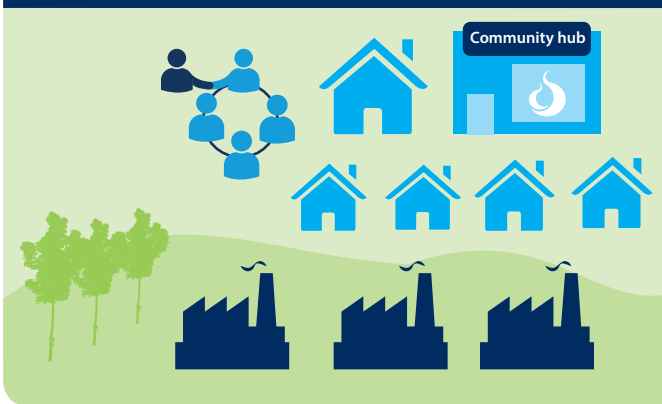


Investing in our treatment works



Where we are now

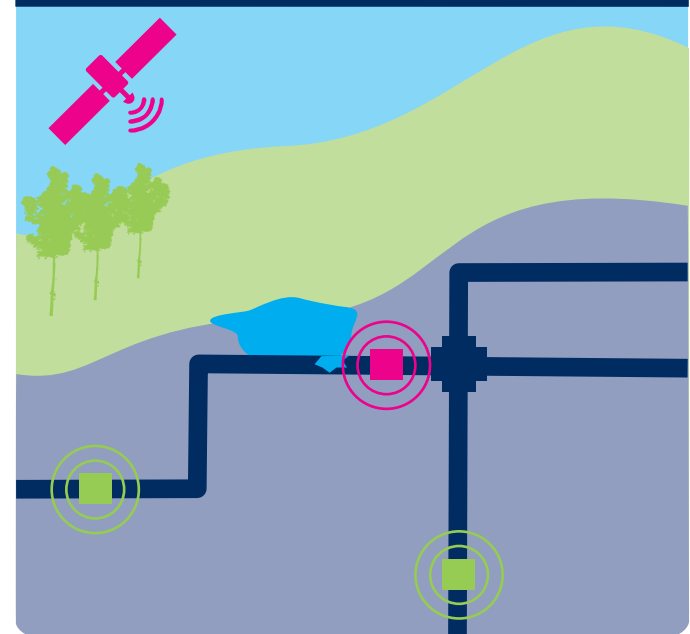
Building meaningful relationships in our communities



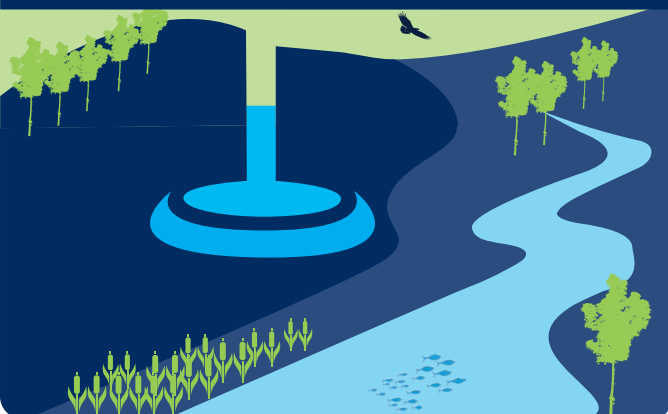
Providing a fast, efficient service



Having an integrated water network



Managing the water we take from the environment



Employing a skilled workforce

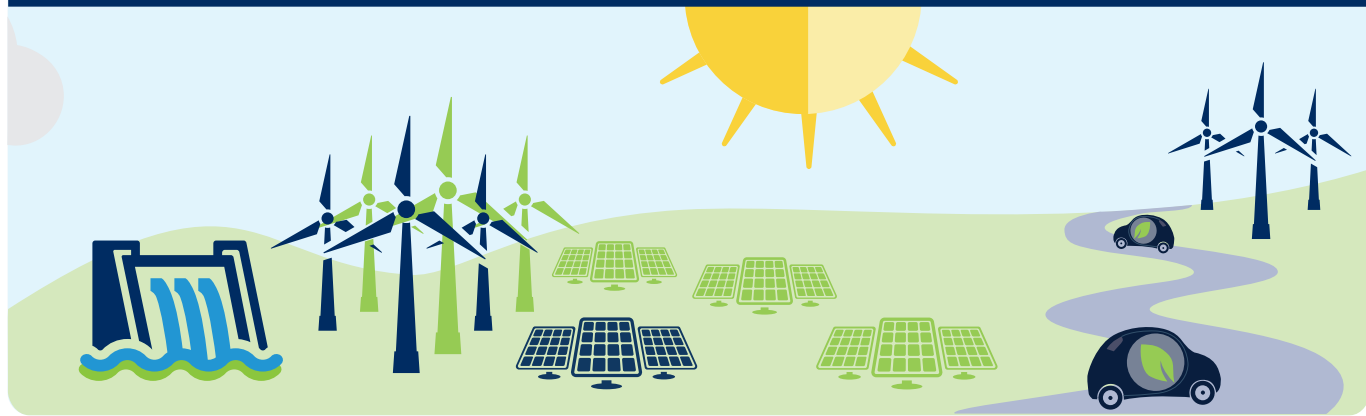


Where  
we will  
be in  
2050

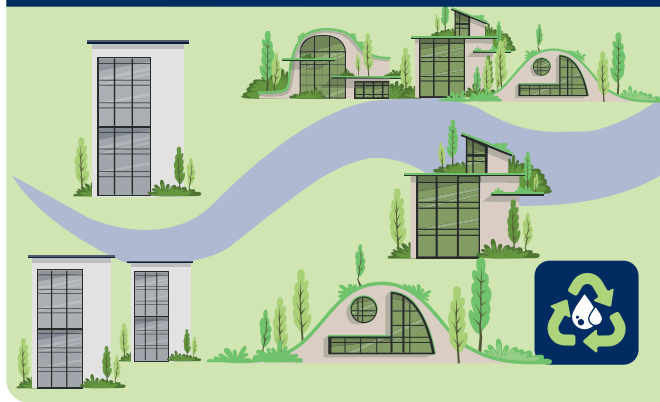
Fully resilient to the impacts of a changing climate



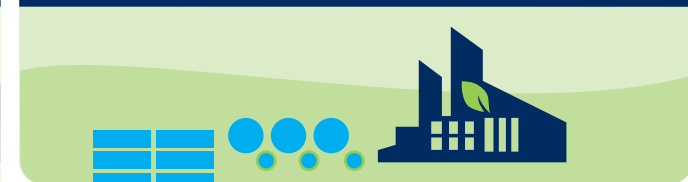
A zero carbon business using renewable energy from different sources at all sites



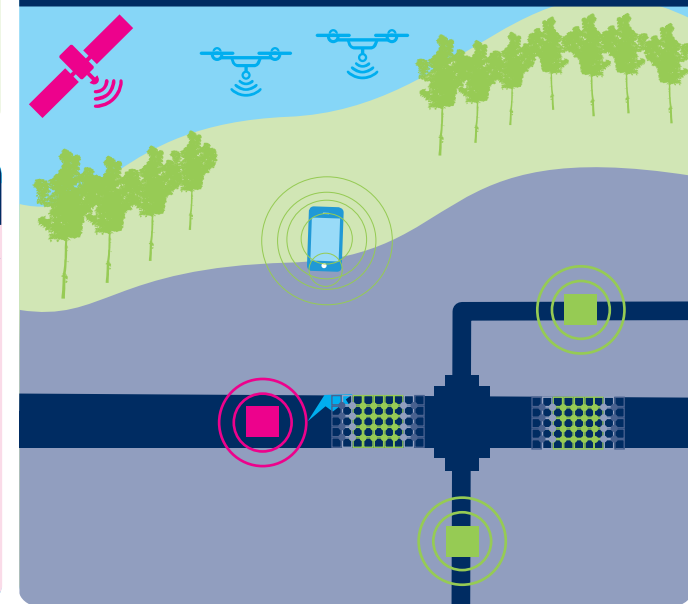
Water recycling in every home and business



Chemical-free water treatment and off-grid sites



A skilled workforce using cutting edge technology to minimise customer impacts



Flourishing habitats and an environment for everyone to enjoy



Thriving and connected communities, with easy access to information



# Our customers' priorities

Our vision is based on delivering the priorities our customers and stakeholders have told us about through our ongoing engagement with them. These priorities include the following.

Providing high-quality water and regular information about the health of the sources from where we take our supplies. This includes underground water sources ('aquifers'), reservoirs and rivers.



Running a sustainable business and placing a greater focus on environmental responsibility. This includes, for example, generating energy from our own sites.

Delivering an efficient customer service. This includes providing accurate bills that are easy to understand and making sure the right support is available to customers who may need extra help.



Always delivering water at the right pressure, now and in the future.

Making the best use of our water resources to address the impact of climate change. This includes reducing leakage, investing in rainwater harvesting technologies and working with other water companies to share supplies.



...And to do all this while keeping water bills affordable for all our customers.

There are also some other areas where customers and stakeholders have differing views on how far they want us to go as a water company. These include the following.



**Playing our part to help our local communities thrive** – for example, by working in partnership with community organisations to improve the local environment; and by funding more support schemes to help make sure water bills do not push people into poverty.



**Empowering people through effective engagement to make the best of the water we take from the environment** – for example, educating young people about the value of water and delivering a smart meter roll out programme to give customers more control over the water they use.



# Our long-term ambitions

Our business plan for each of the five years from 2020 to 2025 focuses on delivering five key outcomes that reflect the areas where our customers told us they want to hold us to account. We believe these still apply to our long-term plans. So we have developed the following ambition statements, which will help us to deliver our vision for 2050.

	<b>Our service</b> We will use <b>cutting edge technology</b> and ensure the infrastructure is in place so that customers always receive resilient, high-quality water supplies.	<b>p.10</b>
	<b>Our environment</b> We will lead in <b>protecting and enhancing the environment</b> – working with partners to ensure sustainable water supplies and flourishing local habitats.	<b>p.12</b>
	<b>Our customers</b> We will innovate to exceed customers' expectations of our service, <b>end water poverty</b> and make sure help is always available.	<b>p.14</b>
	<b>Our community</b> We will use partnerships and education to lift our communities, <b>creating space and opportunities</b> to help people work and thrive.	<b>p.16</b>
	<b>Our business</b> We will lead in <b>adapting to climate change</b> and will run a safe, efficient and sustainable business, with a highly-skilled workforce.	<b>p.18</b>

In the following sections, we consider each of these ambition statements in more detail, explaining what we will do to achieve them. We explain what they mean for customers and other stakeholders, and how we plan to achieve them. As the custodians of this plan we have a responsibility to deliver continual improvements to help achieve our long-term goals.

# Delivering excellent service

We will use cutting edge technology and ensure the infrastructure is in place so that customers always receive resilient, high-quality water supplies



## High-quality water

We will:

- use **innovative, sector leading treatment technology** to push the boundaries of water quality improvement
- look at ways to **reduce our reliance over time on the chemicals** we use in our treatment processes
- follow all new regulatory and legal requirements to make sure the water we **supply is always of the highest quality**



## Cutting edge technology

We will:

- **invest in new technology** that can predict when pipes might burst and other assets might fail
- **install smart meters** to give customers more control over when and where they use water – at home and at work
- expand the capacity of our data systems, helping us to **monitor our pipes and other assets effectively**



## Resilient assets

We will:

- always use **evidence-based 'no regret' investment options for our assets** that represent customers' best interests, where they are available
- develop plans that can adapt to changing circumstances and that **demonstrate our accountability** to customers



## Building resilience for the future – upgrading our Hampton Loade and Seedy Mill water treatment works

A key feature of our plans for the five years from 2020 to 2025 is the ambitious £60 million upgrade programme for our two largest water treatment works – Hampton Loade and Seedy Mill. These treatment works are critically important for us. Taken together, they supply around 60% of customers across our South Staffs region.

At Seedy Mill, we are introducing a second filtration stage, and have plans to carry out additional work during the five years from 2025 to 2030. At Hampton Loade, following a successful bid under the regulator Ofwat's Government-backed green recovery initiative in 2021, we are installing an innovative, high-tech ceramic membrane filtration system. This will deliver a number of benefits for customers, including:

- enhanced water quality;
- lower embedded carbon emissions;
- greater flexibility at the works, while improving operational resilience; and
- reducing our reliance on chemicals, making us more resilient to price and delivery fluctuations within the chemicals market over the long term.

We are currently on track to deliver the upgrades at both water treatment works by 2024/25.

Ambitious  
**£60 million**  
upgrade  
programme



*“The way I see it is that the water quality needs improving and these new investments will make that happen”*

South Staffs Water customer

# Delivering for the environment



We will lead in protecting and enhancing the environment – working with partners to ensure sustainable water supplies and flourishing local habitats



## Sustainable water supplies



## Reduced water demand



## Flourishing habitats

We will:

- **invest in new water sources and regional water transfers** to make sure we have enough water to supply our customers
- reduce how much water we take from rivers and underground water sources to **protect and restore rare habitats**
- identify alternative practices that will help us **deliver non-treatment based solutions** to any emerging water quality challenges

We will:

- work with developers and local communities to **install systems that help our customers to recycle water and reduce how much they use** in their homes and businesses
- lead on working with developers to **design state-of-the-art, water efficient homes and appliances** to help customers use less water
- look to tackle leakage further by using **new and innovative methods to find and fix leaks quickly**, helping to protect water supplies

We will:

- work with partners, communities and action groups to **play our part in restoring chalk stream habitats** in our Cambridge region, while improving water quality and restoring river flows
- work in partnership with Anglian Water to **build a new reservoir in the Fens** by the mid-to late 2030s
- work with communities to **create beautiful environments that everyone can enjoy**



## Creating a ripple with PEBBLE

Every year, we make grants available for projects in our Cambridge and South Staffs regions that deliver biodiversity benefits and positive community impacts. Charities, community groups, schools and other organisations can apply for grants of up to £10,000 from our PEBBLE biodiversity fund. PEBBLE stands for 'Projects that Explore Biodiversity in the Local Environment'.

We have recently awarded grants for a range of projects, including the following.

- Restoration work at Coldham's Brook, a chalk stream in our Cambridge region.
- Developing a wetland and reed bed at the Mill River Reserve in our Cambridge region to improve water quality and provide wildlife habitats.
- Monitoring the presence of Skylarks in the area around Blithfield reservoir in our South Staffs region.
- Improving habitats for bees at a community allotment in our South Staffs region.

Since we first launched our PEBBLE fund in 2016, 54.7 hectares of land (equal to nearly 55 rugby pitches) across our Cambridge and South Staffs regions have been improved through the biodiversity projects we have supported. Looking ahead, we will continue to make grants available through the PEBBLE fund that will help to protect and enhance local habitats.

Since 2016  
**54.7 hectares of land (nearly 55 rugby pitches)**  
have been improved



*I would expect the water company to do its best not to damage any local wildlife habitats and if they did to compensate for it in other areas, for example projects creating habitats like the ones destroyed*

Cambridge Water customer

# Delivering for our customers



We will innovate to exceed customers' expectations of our service, end water poverty and make sure help is always available



## Affordability

We will:

- give customers **greater control over their bills** and reward them for using less water
- proactively identify and **support vulnerable customers who cannot pay their water bills**
- work in partnership with others to **help reduce the burden on customers through the bills** they pay



## Customer choice

We will:

- **use the latest technology** so that customers can communicate with us in the way they prefer
- provide **easy access to new communication channels and tools**, so that no one is left behind



## Proactive customer service

We will:

- use predictive data and insight so that we can **deal with service issues before customers are affected**
- provide an **instant service to customers** and resolve their issues first time, all the time



## Understanding what our customers want

Understanding the things that matter to our customers and the areas where they want to hold us to account is important to us. It helps with our planning and drives our decision-making.

One of the ways we learn about what our customers want is through a customer service performance measure – what we call 'C-MeX'. The aim of C-MeX is to drive us always to deliver excellent levels of service for all our household customers.

C-MeX comprises the results of regular surveys where customers are asked how satisfied they are with the service we provide and how likely they would be to recommend us to their friends.

In 2021/22 we were ranked 4th among the water companies in England and Wales for C-MeX. This is a significant improvement on the previous year, where we were ranked 10th overall.

The improvement reflects the work we have done to enhance the experience customers have with us and in making sure we get things right first time. It also reflects the commitment of our teams to always deliver the best for all our customers, and having the systems and processes in place so that they can do this effectively and efficiently.

**4th for  
customer service  
performance  
in 2021/22**



*Being able to speak to someone directly on the phone about billing is a good thing and its really important this continues*

Cambridge Water customer

# Delivering for our communities



We will use partnerships and education to lift our communities, creating space and opportunities to help people work and thrive



## Educating our customers

We will:

- engage with even more young people, encouraging them to become the water efficiency champions of the future
- encourage behavioural change among our customers, using technology to tailor our information to them more effectively



## Increasing our visibility and accessibility

We will:

- collaborate with local groups and organisations, and listen to what our communities want from us in the future
- support our hard-to-reach communities, taking into account language, disability and technology accessibility considerations
- build on the success of our innovative community hub, adapting our approach in line with customers' future needs



## Leading by example

We will:

- encourage and train the next generation of water sector experts across our business, focusing on developing new skills as appropriate
- continue to listen to and engage with our customers and communities, and act to deliver the things that matter most to them





## Making a difference in our communities

In 2018, in a first for the England and Wales water companies, we opened a community hub in Wednesbury, a small town in our South Staffs region. Our hub is a permanent base at the heart of the community. It is accessible to everyone and has a dedicated team on hand to help customers. We also partner with a number of local groups and charities through our hub, meaning we can be more than a water company.

Since its launch, our community hub has helped more than 16,100 customers. This includes providing advice on things like having a water meter, support to pay bills, and signing up to our Priority Services Register. Our community team recognises how important face-to-face engagement is for some of our customers and the support our hub provides – it has become a lifeline for them.

Through our community hub, we have been able to get involved with a number of local initiatives, including school uniform swaps and providing support for a local foodbank. We are proud of the role it plays and how it helps us deliver our commitment to being embedded within the communities we serve.

Our community hub has helped more than **16,100** customers



*Utility poverty is a huge problem in this country and sometimes a break makes all the difference*

South Staffs Water customer



# Delivering for our business

We will lead in adapting to climate change and will run a safe, efficient and sustainable business, with a highly-skilled workforce



Delivering net zero carbon emissions



A safe, efficient and sustainable business



A skilled workforce

We will:

- look at all the options available to us to **reduce the carbon emissions from our operations**
- **explore renewable energy options**, including wind and solar power, and biofuel gas
- use efficient procurement processes and collaborate with suppliers to **reach our net zero target by 2050**

We will:

- make sure our people have a **positive working experience, with hybrid working** where possible and sustainable office spaces
- make greater use of remote technology and **use smart, digital versions of our network** as the norm to monitor everything

We will:

- continue to use our apprenticeship, succession planning and development schemes to make sure we **recruit and retain the right people**
- continue to engage with our people effectively and **help them to always deliver their best for our customers**
- continue to ensure our people always have **the skills and development opportunities** they need to do their jobs effectively



## Investing in our people

In our business plan for the five years from 2020 to 2025 we committed to achieve Investors in People (IIP) accreditation by the end of the 2020/21 financial year. IIP is an internationally recognised standard for people management. It looks at how a business leads, supports and improves its people, and any steps it could take to do this better.

To achieve IIP accreditation, we were required to successfully meet the standards across nine strategic levels and 39 separate evidence points. We achieved Standard IIP accreditation in November 2021 and have been working through the action plan on areas to improve.

We believe that achieving IIP accreditation establishes us as a great employer that values its people. It signals to our teams, customers, suppliers and wider stakeholders that we are committed to continuing our success and further improvement. It also signals how we support all our people to live our values of equality, diversity and inclusion; excellence in service; responsibility; trust; and respect.

We now have the foundations in place to help us drive further improvements, while giving us the information and data we need to ensure we can build on this success in the future.

Achieved  
**Standard IIP  
accreditation**  
in November  
2021



*I felt valued from day one when I saw a dedicated prayer room available on site to practice my faith*

South Staffordshire Water PLC employee, Cambridge region

# Delivering a long-term strategy

This high-level vision represents our initial thinking on the sort of business we want to be by 2050.

It is one of a number of documents we will be publishing over the next two years that set out our direction of travel, and our plans for ensuring secure water supplies now and in the future.

Central to our thinking are the critical relationships we have with our customers, our communities and the environment.

The decisions we take for each of these areas will help us to develop and implement our long-term delivery strategy.

We will continue to revisit this document as we develop our long-term plans, adapting it as required to reflect changing circumstances.

**2022**

**October 2022**  
Draft water resources management plans submitted to the Secretary of State at Defra ahead of public consultation

**November 2022**  
Draft regional water resources plans published for consultation

**November 2022**  
'Looking to the future' long-term strategic vision published

**October 2023**  
Final water resources management plans submitted to the Secretary of State at Defra ahead of publication

**October 2023**  
'Securing your water future' business plan 2025 to 2030 and long-term delivery strategy submitted to the regulator Ofwat

**September 2023**  
Final regional water resources plans published

**2023**

**2024**

**Spring 2024**  
Ofwat's draft decisions on water companies' business plans

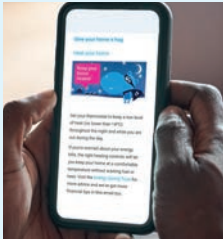
**Winter 2024**  
Ofwat's final decisions on water companies' business plans

**2025**

**April 2025**  
New price controls for 2025 to 2030 come into effect. These will be reflected in the bills our customers pay

# Engaging with us

There are numerous ways for you to engage with us and play your part in helping us to achieve our long-term ambitions. We'd love you to get in touch using the channels listed here.



## Sign up for our customer email newsletters

Share your email address with us to stay up to date with all our news.

[www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/newsletters](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/newsletters)

[www.cambridge-water.co.uk/newsletters](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/newsletters)



## Follow us on social media

Learn more about what's going on in your area, chat with our friendly people, read advice on topics such as saving water, and find out more about our support schemes.



## Join H2Online, our online community

H2Online, our online customer community, is a place where you can share your views and win prizes. We use feedback from our community members to make important changes and better shape our services for the future.

[www.cambridge-water.co.uk/community/h2online](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/community/h2online)

[www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/community/h2online](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/community/h2online)



## Feedback on our long-term vision

If you've got any feedback about our vision to 2050, please feel free share your thoughts by emailing us at:

[PR24team@south-staffs-water.co.uk](mailto:PR24team@south-staffs-water.co.uk)



## Cambridge Water

90 Fulbourn Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 9JN

Tel: +44 (0)1223 706050

[www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk)

## South Staffs Water

Green Lane  
Walsall  
WS2 7PD

Tel: +44 (0)1922 638282

[www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)