

➤ Our areas ...



Essex & Suffolk Water has two separate supply areas. Our 'Suffolk' area covers the coastal strip from Great Yarmouth to Aldeburgh and inland to Eye. It is mostly in Suffolk, though a small part to the north east is in Norfolk. Serving a population of 0.3 million, it is mainly rural in nature with the biggest towns being Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Just over half the water we supply in this area is taken from the rivers Waveney and Bure, and from lakes at Lound and Ormesby. The remainder is pumped from underground sources. Modest population growth is forecast in Suffolk.

Our 'Essex' area, which currently has a population of 1.5 million, is part rural and part urban with the main areas of population being in Chelmsford, Southend and the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge. The majority of water supplied to our customers in Essex comes from rivers within the county. The remaining supplies are obtained via a bulk supply agreement with Thames Water Utilities and from Norfolk via the Ely Ouse to Essex water transfer scheme. A very small amount comes from underground boreholes. Essex is the driest county in the UK and over the next 25 years the demand for water is predicted to rise by around 6%, almost entirely due to an increase in population.

➤ Our assets ...

We supply around 470 million litres of water to our customers every day. To do this we operate and maintain seven impounding reservoirs, 27 water treatment works, 43 service reservoirs and over 100 pumping stations. The water is supplied through 8,500 km of water pipes – enough to stretch from Lands End to John O'Groats and back four times.



John Cuthbert,
Managing Director.

Foreword

Essex & Suffolk Water has come a long way since the water industry was privatised nearly 20 years ago.

The quality of our drinking water is the best it has ever been. In 2006 we were able to avoid the need to impose a hosepipe ban during an unprecedented period of drought. This was the result of our efforts to reduce leakage, promote water efficiency, introduce metering and develop water resources. Most importantly, levels of customer service have improved enormously and customer satisfaction levels are consistently high.

There have been major changes in the world around us in that time, too. Technology has transformed the way we live and work – 20 years ago who would have imagined the impact the internet or mobile phone would have on our lives?

Yet for Essex & Suffolk Water there has been one constant and that is our commitment to give our customers an excellent service and to provide value for money. That commitment will remain as we prepare our strategy for the next 25 years and beyond.

We have already undertaken extensive research with our customers to make sure we can continue to achieve and improve upon these high levels of customer satisfaction and to understand how they value, and are prepared to pay for, our services.

This document is the next stage in our planning process, and is your opportunity to contribute to our plans.

No-one can predict with complete certainty what the world will look like in 25 years time, but we have tried to identify the main challenges we will face and how we propose to overcome them. A key challenge will be to ensure that we are able to continue to supply our customers with the water they need, as the region's population grows and the changing climate makes rainfall more variable, without damaging the natural environment.

I am proud of the excellent reputation that Essex & Suffolk Water has deservedly achieved as a leader in all aspects of demand management and leakage control. These activities will continue to be a fundamental part of our plans but on their own will not be sufficient. In addition it is essential that we increase storage capacity to capture rain when it falls so that it can be used later when required. The expansion of Abberton reservoir near Colchester, which we hope to complete by 2014, is of fundamental importance to this strategy.

Water is a vital element for your health and the environment we all live in, so please take time to consider our plans and send us your comments.

Thank you

John Cuthbert

Managing Director

28 November 2007

Introduction

Essex & Suffolk Water (ESW) has produced a long term plan called 'Looking to the future'. This page describes who we are, what this document contains and how you can give us your views on our plans.

Who we are

ESW provides water services to 1.8 million people in the south east of England. It does not provide sewerage services. These are supplied by either Anglian Water Services or Thames Water Utilities depending on where the customer lives.

Essex & Suffolk Water and Northumbrian Water are the trading names of Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) which is an independent company with its headquarters in County Durham. Northumbrian Water provides water and sewerage services to 2.6 million people in the north east of England.

This document only covers our operations in Essex and Suffolk.

Our role

Our role is to provide a sustainable, affordable, clean and safe water supply and to carry out our operations in the most environmentally sensitive way possible.

Our mission

To be the national leader in sustainable water services.

Our people

We employ over 700 people to deliver services in Essex and Suffolk. One of our strengths is the commitment and loyalty of our employees, with employee turnover being well below the water industry average.

What this document contains

We are planning the services ESW aims to provide in the future. We put meeting the expectations of our customers at the heart of our plans.

Mapping out our ambitions for the next 25 to 30 years will allow us to plan and phase investment over the years to make achieving our future objectives affordable.

This document sets our goals and aspirations for the long term. It has been written for consideration by all of our stakeholders but with a particular focus on our customers.

A separate document is available describing our plans for our operations in the north east.

Giving us your views

We welcome your views which will help us further shape this strategy. Comments should be made by the end of February 2008 via our website www.eswater.co.uk or sent to us in writing to: John Devall, Director, Essex & Suffolk Water, Hanningfield Water Treatment Works, Middlemead, South Hanningfield, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8HS.

Summary



Aerial shot of Hanningfield reservoir near Chelmsford.

This document sets out our long term business aspirations and our intermediate goals.

Our mission is to be the national leader in sustainable water services. We are passionate about customer service and have put customers at the forefront of our strategy. We will strive to:

- satisfy our customers and deliver affordable services
- protect and enhance the environment
- take a sustainable approach to all our activities
- behave fairly and responsibly
- contribute to economic development in our region
- improve the quality of life of the communities we serve
- attract and retain high calibre employees
- be a learning organisation, promoting and embracing innovation.

We are committed to not only safeguarding current services but also improving them for the long term benefit of our customers and the communities we serve.

We aim to balance social, environmental and economic priorities.

We have a responsibility to the people and businesses in Essex and Suffolk. We aim to contribute to regional development by providing top class, competitive water services, by being a responsible employer and by protecting and enhancing the environment. We are committed to supplying excellent drinking water quality. To do this we will proactively identify risks from source to tap and take action to manage them.

If too much water is taken from rivers for water supply or other reasons, this can be harmful to wildlife. We will ensure the amount of water we abstract does not contribute to these problems and will continue to give a high priority to ensuring our operations are sustainable. This includes minimising our carbon emissions and enhancing habitats for wildlife on land under our control.

continued overleaf ...

Summary continued ...

Our strategy has a firm foundation. Drinking water quality is at an all time high. Customers continue to have sufficient water for their needs and careful management ensured supplies were maintained without a hosepipe ban during the recent drought. Satisfaction with service and value for money is also high, with customers scoring the company an average of 7.9 and 7.6 (out of 10.0) respectively for these measures. We are proud of this record but more can and should be done.

Summaries of our long term aspirations and intermediate goals are shown opposite. They reflect our understanding of our customers' priorities and what we believe a leading water company should aspire to do. We believe they are challenging and deliver improvements which our customers value.

The timescale for achieving our long term aspirations will vary. Some, such as customers having no cause for complaint, may never be entirely achieved but represent aspirations we will constantly work towards.

Our intermediate goals take into account current knowledge of customers' priorities and willingness to pay for improvements. Unless specified otherwise, we plan to achieve intermediate goals by 2020. Our business plan for 2010 to 2015 will include a package of measures that move us towards these goals.

For many areas investment will be needed to maintain and further improve service. We are committed to refurbishing and replacing our assets at appropriate intervals. Our asset base has been growing and, therefore, we will need to increase investment in these maintenance activities in the future.

We expect investment on new water quality standards to reduce but significant investment will be required to ensure there is sufficient water in our Essex area to serve the growing population. Investment will also be required to deal with climate change, particularly to manage the risk of our assets flooding from rivers and rising sea levels.

There remain uncertainties but we believe overall investment will increase slightly in the medium term before returning to around current levels.

We are very aware that bills must remain affordable for our customers. We intend to manage the level of bills by being as efficient as possible and carefully phasing investment over time, guided where appropriate by our customers' views. We aim to keep bills as low as possible without compromising the sustainable provision of safe and secure water supplies or our commitment to protecting the environment.

There are pressures to increase bills that are outside our control. For example new requirements brought in by government, such as the Traffic Management Act, may increase the cost of providing services and there may be further rises in abstraction costs and energy bills.

As we go forward we will continue to work closely with stakeholders in the region and nationally. We aim to be well placed to adapt to new situations and to adopt new ideas and technologies where these will benefit our customers and stakeholders. We will review our long term plans at appropriate intervals.

Our plans are set out in more detail in the rest of this document.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

AREA	INTERMEDIATE GOAL	LONG TERM ASPIRATION
Satisfaction with service (score out of 10.0)	All customers satisfied (100% of customers score 6.0 or more) Average score improved from 7.9 to 8.5	All customers continue to be satisfied (100% of customers score 6.0 or more) Average score above 8.5
Satisfaction with value for money (score out of 10.0)	90% of customers score 6.0 or more Average score improved from 7.6 to 8.0	90% of customers continue to score 6.0 or more Average score above 8.0
Billing and metering complaints	Reduce complaints by 50%	Remove all cause for complaint
Customer contacts (operational matters)	Resolve 80% at first point of contact	Resolve 90% at first point of contact
Customer contacts (billing matters)	Resolve 95% at first point of contact	Continue to resolve 95% at first point of contact

WATER QUALITY

Safe water supplies	Zero breaches of health related water quality standards	Continue to have zero breaches of health related water quality standards
Discoloured water complaints	Reduce complaints by 33% to 600 per annum	Zero complaints
Taste and odour of drinking water	Investigate and produce an action plan by 2013	All customers find drinking water pleasant to drink

AVAILABILITY OF WATER

Sufficiency of water supplies	Continue to provide sufficient water in the face of population growth and climate change A key aspect being delivery of the Abberton Scheme by 2014	Continue to provide sufficient water
Frequency of hosepipe bans	1 in 20 years	Continue with 1 in 20 years
Leakage from pipes	Manage at the long term sustainable economic level	Continue to manage at the long term sustainable economic level
Saving water	Actively promote reductions in water use and wastage	Continue to actively promote reductions in water use and wastage
Metering in our Essex area	Achieve as near to universal metering as practicable by 2020	Continue to meter as many properties as practicable
Metering in our Suffolk area	Achieve as near to universal metering as practicable by around 2023	Continue to meter as many properties as practicable
Unplanned interruptions to supply	Reduce by 50%	Zero unplanned interruptions
Planned interruptions to supply	Reduce current levels by 25%	Reduce current levels by 50%
Water pressure	Reduce properties receiving poor pressure by 67%	Zero properties with poor pressure

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Sustainability	Factor sustainability into all of our planning and actions	Factor sustainability into all of our planning and actions
Water abstraction	Continue to ensure water abstractions do not damage wildlife and ecology	Continue to ensure water abstractions do not damage wildlife and ecology
Biodiversity	Contribute to 95% of SSSIs being in favourable condition or recovering by 2010	To increase biodiversity on our land holdings
Carbon management	20% of energy used self generated by 2015	Move towards carbon neutrality
Protecting services against climate change	'Future proof' services against climate change and its effects	'Future proof' services against climate change and its effects

FINANCIAL

Company efficiency	To be recognised as one of the most efficient companies in the UK by 2015	To be recognised as the most efficient water company in the UK
Financing the investment programme	Maintain a solid investment grade rating	Maintain a solid investment grade rating

EMPLOYEES

Health and safety	Continually improving trend towards zero accidents resulting in time off work	Zero accidents resulting in time off work
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