

## **Top performance for customers and the environment**

Wessex Water is providing the highest levels of customer service and continuing to invest in schemes across the region to improve the health of rivers.

Customer experience scores for the first half of the year, published by Ofwat, confirm that Wessex Water remained top of the leader board for water and sewerage companies. And in CCW's latest household complaint-handling report, it is one of two top performers.

The latest results reinforce the company's solid track record and commitment to providing the best customer service. It retained the Customer Service Excellence accolade and continues to achieve an "Excellent" rating on Trustpilot based on customer reviews. And it was named as the leading water and sewerage company for compliance with drinking water standards, with the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) naming Wessex Water as the top performer for the compliance risk index (CRI) measure for the second year in a row.

In the first six months of the year, Wessex Water continued to demonstrate strong performance to meet 2023-24 regulatory targets and performance measures against the ongoing challenges of volatile weather patterns and tighter regulatory standards.

More than £3m a month is being spent on schemes to reduce storm overflows – with a number completed or well under way involving the construction of underground storage tanks to store stormwater until heavy rainfall events have passed. Nature-based projects, which have wider environmental benefits, have also been progressed. Additionally, millions of pounds have been invested to improve processes at water recycling centres to remove phosphorus and nitrates, improving the health of rivers.

In October Wessex Water announced proposals to go even further and invest more between 2025 and 2030 by doubling the current level of investment to £3.5bn, subject to regulatory approval. The plan would reduce pollution, storm overflow operation and leakage, and leave more water in the environment to cater for all our needs over the long term.

Chief Executive Colin Skellett said: "Customers rightly have high expectations of the water services they receive and the way we protect the environment around us. In the first half of this financial year, we have finalised our business plan for 2025-2030. We submit these business plans to our economic regulator, Ofwat, every five years. This sets out what we need to do to maintain our existing assets, to build new ones and to meet the requirements of customers, new development

and our various quality regulators.

“This plan represents a major change – we are proposing to more than double our current level of investment to £3.5bn and to deliver a massively ambitious set of outcomes.”

In Wessex Water’s interim results published today (29 November), the company reported on the challenges of the weather experienced this year.

Mr Skellett explained: “Climate change continues to drive real changes in weather patterns – we have seen the hottest June in the UK since records began in 1884, significant flooding events and more frequent, more intense rainfall. These events all have significant impacts on our operations, but we have continued to provide resilient services to our customers throughout.

“This is something we are immensely proud of but cannot take for granted. Significant investment is required to ensure we maintain these levels of service in increasingly unstable and extreme weather events.”

Wessex Water said it was working hard towards being a top performer on the Environment Agency’s assessment of environmental performance and as part of this is continuing its investment to monitor all parts of its sewerage network so that it can predict changes that may lead to pollution incidents. It continues to support calls for government to ban wet wipes, which cause the majority of blockages that result in pollutions.

With this year being tough for many customers, with extremely high energy prices and food bills fuelled by continuing high inflation, Wessex Water has continued to develop support for those struggling to pay.

Mr Skellett said: “With budgets squeezed, affordability has become increasingly difficult for many, particularly for those in vulnerable circumstances. We have always devoted a lot of attention to our range of support packages, which are collectively called our tailored assistance programme (tap), to help our customers afford their bills through very difficult times. It is now quicker and easier than ever to access these packages and we are committed to eradicating water poverty in our area.”

Financial results for the six months to September 2023 showed turnover increased by £20.2m from £266.8m to £287.0m, while profit after taxation fell from a profit of £3.8m in 2022 to a loss after taxation of £8.0m.