

# To provide great water for a stronger, greener and healthier Manchester

## Summary of the event



United Utilities is developing its business plan for 2025-30 and we want our customers and stakeholders to have their say on how we shape those plans.

We recently held a 'Your water, your say' online open challenge session on 22 June 2023 and invited household customers, businesses as well as those representing regional and national interest groups to attend.

The session is part of the Price Review process known as PR24. It is designed to enable people in Greater Manchester to hear about our proposed draft plan, including the challenges we are facing as a sector and the different ways we're working with communities and stakeholders, to deliver more for customers and the environment.

It was an opportunity to put questions directly to the company's Chief Executive and other senior directors and highlight the issues they want us to focus on in the future.

The event was hosted by independent facilitator Bernice Law, Chair of Your Voice panel, the independent challenge group representing United Utilities' customers and stakeholders across the North West.

Members from our Executive Team included:

- Louise Beardmore, Chief Executive
- James Bullock, Strategy, Policy and Regulation Director
- Jo Harrison, Environment, Planning & Innovation Director
- Mike Gauterin, Customer Service Director

This is a summary of the discussion which centred on the three themes of our plan, which is to make the North West **stronger, greener, and healthier**.

When we submit our draft 2025 - 2030 plan to Ofwat in October 2023, it will have to set out how it is addressing the issues raised.

Following a welcome and introduction by the independent chair, Chief Executive Louise Beardmore gave a 15-minute presentation on the company's proposed draft plan for 2025-30 and what it means for customers and stakeholders in Greater Manchester.

### Overview of plan for North West and Greater Manchester

We serve 7 million customers here in the North West, supporting over 200,000 businesses.

We are also a huge employer in the region, employing over 22,000 skilled jobs, both in terms of delivering our services, but also in terms of improving our infrastructure across the 5 counties, including Cheshire.

We want to ensure it delivers a plan for the North West that improves the services for customers and for the environment.

It is time for a step change to deliver an ambitious plan that benefits everyone.

We are embarking on the largest infrastructure investment in the company's history to help reduce the use of storm overflows. We have already taken action and have delivered a 39% reduction in spills since 2020 – but we know that's not enough.

### Across the North West we plan to:

- Reduce the amount of water leakage – by at least a 20% improvement\*
- Reduce interruptions to customers' water supply – by at least a 40% improvement\*
- Reduce the number of pollution incidents – by at least a 30% improvement\*

- Reduce the number of water quality issues customers experience – by at least a 50% improvement\*
- Reduce the number of properties affected by sewer flooding inside their property – by at least a 30% improvement\*
- Reduce the impact of storm overflows – 60% improvement\*
- Provide £500m of affordability support for customers struggling with their bills

*\*% performance improvement from 2021/22 to 2030*

**Through our plan for Greater Manchester we will:**

- Work with our partners to deliver Integrated Water Management to minimise the risk of flooding and disruption, and use nature-based solutions to deliver more green spaces
- Invest more than ever before to reduce our impact on rivers and drive improvements from others to protect the local environment and improve water quality
- Offer sector-leading support to customers who face difficulties paying their water bill and put in place extra support for vulnerable customers with additional needs
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## Summary of main topics of discussion during Q&A section

### Long-term water supply

Water is a vital but limited natural resource. The pressures of population growth, climate change and environmental considerations mean that it’s now more important than ever to plan how we will manage water resources. With careful planning we can continue to deliver a reliable supply of water for customers in the future, while protecting the environment.

With increasing pressure on water resources across the UK, our Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) defines our strategy to achieve a long-term, best value and sustainable plan for water supplies in the North West.

We produce a WRMP every five years, and this sets out how we intend to achieve a secure supply of water for our customers. When testing the plan, we considered a range of scenarios and options taking account of uncertainties around climate change, water transfers, and the amount of water needed, population growth and environmental changes.

This helps us to understand what the risks are in the short, medium and long-term to our water supplies across the region.

As part of our plans being put forward for the Price Review, we are looking at how to drive improvements in leakage, how to reduce customer demand so people are using less, and how to develop new sources of water.

### Reducing Leakage

We’re increasing our efforts to find and fix leaks, using new technology where possible to help us reduce the level of leaks faster.

Water is a precious resource and we plan to reduce the level of leakage by at least 20% and have set targets to reduce leakage by 50% by 2050.

To reach these targets, we are driving innovation and taking a holistic technology led approach.

We are installing a series of sensors across the North West to understand how our pipe work is performing and where those leaks may be happening, and, more importantly, get out to fix them quicker.

We’ve developed and deployed artificial intelligence which uses rapid machine-learning to interpret the unique data trail left by leaks, tracking them down to pinpoint their exact location and identifying their size, just by the sound they make.

We work with customers to identify leakages in their homes and businesses too.

We know we have to do more. We continue to innovate and work closely with partners to reduce leakage and strive to deliver a great service to customers across the North West.

### **Reducing customer demand**

Making the best use of our water is a major part of our plan to ensure there is a sufficient supply of water for the decades ahead. To address challenges around future supply we need to lower demand and create new water sources.

We are working closely with customers to help support them to use less water by raising customer awareness about the importance of saving water. We know customers genuinely care about how much water they are using and would like to understand more.

As part of our plan, we will install 670,000 new smart meters that will give customers information about their water use, giving them confidence to move to a water meter and become more water efficient.

Customers who are on a water meter typically use 21% less than other customers. If customers have visibility and usage information, it can help drive down the reduction in water usage.

### **New water sources**

Most of our water in the North West comes from reservoirs, with over half coming from Cumbria and Wales.

Reservoirs can fill quickly when it rains and empty quickly when it's bright and sunny. Therefore, we need to put in place plans to ensure that we are resilient in the long-term.

Our plan involves developing a number of additional sources of water.

We look at the resilience of all our local networks, our local storage reservoirs and pumping stations. We plan to improve resilience in any areas that are deemed vulnerable by building new pipes, putting new pumps in place so that we can protect customer supplies in the long-term.

In addition, we're part of the Water Resources West regional planning group (along with Severn Trent Water, Welsh Water and South Staffs Water and other stakeholders), and we have developed our WRMP with input from the group so it is aligned with an overall regional plan.

Together we have considered the needs of other, more water stressed, areas of the country too and the scope to transfer water from the North West to the South. We will develop new groundwater sources to improve the resilience of supplies in the North West and to support any potential transfer in the future. In considering any potential transfer, we will ensure it does not affect the reliability of the water supply in our region or cause any significant harm to the environment.

### **Bills and affordability**

Customers want us to ensure that the North West is a great place to live and work, and, more importantly, that we have the infrastructure to support that.

Customers want us to spend money wisely and efficiently, so we can make sure that we keep bills affordable.

The average annual bill today is £417. Going forward that bill will increase, before inflation, to £512 by 2030, a £20 increase each year for the 5 years.

Of that £20, approximately £5 to £6 will go towards the new infrastructure that we need to deliver to improve drainage and to reduce storm overflows.

Affordability is also a hugely important issue for many people in the region and lowering bills and helping customers out of water poverty is a priority.

We recognise the social and economic challenges of a region that includes some of the most deprived areas in the country, so it is more important than ever that we are doing what we can to help those customers who are struggling with payments.

We currently offer six different help to pay schemes, dependent on their needs. Over 113,800 people across Greater Manchester already use this assistance.

Between now and 2030 we will look to double the financial support package we offer across the North West, from £250 million to £500 million.

### **Supporting jobs and local economy**

We already employ over 1,328 people who live in Greater Manchester.

As we embark on our largest ever investment programme to deliver environmental improvements, this will stimulate greater employment opportunities directly, and through our supply chain, contributing to local economies across the North West.

We're proud to invest in young people, offering several opportunities including graduate, apprenticeship and intern schemes.

We have the only Ofsted accredited training centre in the sector where we are training people for jobs for the future.

For example, we have recruited Green Apprenticeships to help achieve our plans to go carbon neutral by the end of this decade.

### **Infrastructure investment**

We understand that our customers and stakeholders want us to do much more to protect our natural environment.

In response, we are embarking on the largest investment programme since privatisation to ensure our plan makes the North West stronger, greener, and healthier.

In Greater Manchester, we're going to develop the first city region Integrated Water Management Plan in partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to reduce flood risk and enable economic growth across the region.

We are going to spend £146 million managing surface water and reducing flooding risk.

We are investing £200 million to rebuild Salford Wastewater Treatment Works to meet the demand of the fast-growing population.

We are delivering £2 million of new infrastructure critical for the Northern Gateway Development.

In addition, we are going to invest £2.5 billion in the region to improve 104 storm overflows that will protect 96 kilometres of rivers.

We are also spending £146 million on sustainable rainwater management solutions across Greater Manchester.

### **Protecting the environment**

As a trusted company, we're committed to improving the environment across the region.

We understand we need to invest in our system, and work closely with customers, stakeholders and partners to protect and enhance the long-term resilience of the environment for future generations.

### **Combined Sewage Overflows (CSOs)**

Storm overflows are an important part of the sewerage network and include combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and storm tank discharges.

They act as a pressure relief valve when there is too much rainfall, allowing rainwater, mixed with sewage, to rise inside the sewer and eventually enter a separate pipe which flows into a river or the sea.

Sewers operate this way to help prevent the flooding of streets, homes and businesses. When we do need to use them, they can sometimes affect river and bathing water quality, albeit temporarily.

We want to remove combined sewer overflows from the North West in terms of the way that they operate.

The plan that we are putting forward for the next 5 years is going to see the company reduce storm flow activations by 60% (*compared to the 2020 baseline*).

The challenges won't be fixed overnight, similar to the transition of electric cars from diesel cars, as the infrastructure needs to be put in place first.

That means re-plumbing the North West region and building new infrastructure so that our systems can cope with future population growth and challenges arising from climate change.

### **Reducing the risk of flooding**

A partnership approach to tackling flooding is crucial to ensure we can respond quickly and thoroughly.

We have reduced sewer flooding in people's homes by short of 39%. We've been investing in technology across the North West and installing a series of sensors in our network so we can monitor and understand how our sewers are performing.

More importantly, this will help to identify problems with blockages or issues sooner, so that we can get to customer's homes quicker, and fix the problem before it occurs.

We've got some of the biggest and most ambitious targets across the sector to drive down sewer flooding. This is going to be one of the key targets that we put forward in the next 5-year Asset Management Plan (AMP).

### **Executive Pay**

Our executive pay continues to be firmly aligned to the performance of the company with respect to delivery for customers.

The senior team is incentivised on the issues that are important to customers including reducing leakage, reducing combined sewer overflows, and pollution events for example.

## **Full Q&A and responses**

### **Stronger**

#### **Q1. How much water was lost last year through leakage and what is united utilities doing to improve that?**

United Utilities has achieved its leakage targets for the last 17 years, and, across the North West, leakage is the lowest level that it has ever been.

But we've got to go further. Water is a precious resource and we've got to make sure that we're doing all we can to reduce the level of leakage in the plan by at least 20% and have set targets to reduce leakage by 50% by 2050.

Currently around 20% of the water we supply each day is lost through leakage from:

- Leakage from our network of pipes
- Leakage inside a property such as from leaking toilets
- Leakage from customer supply pipe that generally runs from the stop tap into the house

To reduce leakage, we are driving innovation and taking a technology led approach. This means:

- We are using technology, data and information better so we can understand where these leaks are happening.
- We are installing a series of sensors right across the North West to make sure that we can understand how our pipe work is performing and where those leaks may be happening, and, more importantly, get out to fix them quicker.
- We've developed and deployed artificial intelligence which uses rapid machine-learning to interpret the unique data trail left by leaks, tracking them down to pinpoint their exact location and identifying their size, just by the sound they make.
- We support customers with leaks in their home including private leakage repair schemes.

In addition, we have a comprehensive plan to upgrade and renew some of our water main pipes to stop further leaks.

We are also looking at installing smart meters on our networks so customers can get better sight and understanding of where water might be being lost on their pipes.

**Q2. Due to climate change, we are getting more heavy rainfalls and flash flooding. I understand you are doing what you can, but how quickly are you able to respond to these incidents?**

We need an integrated approach to tackle flood risk and water management in Greater Manchester.

We have formed a partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to put in place an Integrated Water Management plan for the region. We believe we have all got to play our part to address the key challenges of climate change. We can do this by working closely with stakeholders and partners.

As towns and cities have developed, we have lost natural ground areas that previously collected rainwater. For example, many homes in Greater Manchester have had gardens concreted over for driveways.

As we've lost those natural areas, we need to look at what else we can do to collect and reuse rainwater so that it's not entering and putting pressure on our network.

We have several innovative plans in Greater Manchester. These include:

- Installing new technologies, such as sustainable urban drainage
- Creating more permeable driveways
- Looking at grey water recycling schemes
- Installing smart water butts

We need to manage rainwater in a very different way. This means incentivizing others to make sure that they are putting appropriate schemes in place too. We are working with housing developers to increase adoption of sustainable surface water drainage systems (SuDS) onto their network. This will deliver environmental benefits and improve river health by slowing down rainwater runoff.

United Utilities offers a 90% reduction in charges to developers building water efficient homes.

It's important to make sure that as climate change continues to evolve, we're making sure our environments are able to deal with the increases that we're seeing in surface water. We're using blue-green infrastructure together with nature-based solutions to manage water differently.

There are great examples of work already taking place with Stockport Council and Oldham Council to look at how we can do that.

Between 2025 and 2030, we will spend £200 million to focus on this. The majority of investment will be spent in Greater Manchester.

**Q.3. How well do customers understand what you are doing in terms of incentives, sustainable drainage, rainwater harvesting so that customers – both residential and business - can play their part?**

Customers are becoming more aware as people are seeing more flash floods.

That's why the work we've been doing with developers is essential. We're giving them huge discounts to make sure they are designing water efficient homes. The company is looking at retrofit solutions, but we are also looking at making it easier for customers who want to access some of our capabilities and technologies.

Our plans for Greater Manchester are huge and at a level we have not seen before.

We have installed sustainable urban drainage systems in Salford and planted street trees helping to improve the environment alongside the visual amenity and enjoyment of our spaces. We will continue to work with customers and stakeholders to identify ways we can all play our part.

**Q4. With pollution and waste entering our rivers, waterways and catchment areas, is there any reassurance that the consumer would not be disproportionately affected by the cost of the necessary infrastructure? Would there be any penalties incurred by businesses who continue to pollute?**

There's lots of people, businesses, and organisations that discharge into rivers and into sewers. We are building infrastructure to deal with the runoff.

Legally, we have to take everybody's waste. Everybody has a right to connect into the sewer, and that is a feature of the way the system was set up, so the company can't refuse anybody's pollution.

The North West has 28% more runoff than the average for elsewhere in the country. That's coming off from highways and that's running off from businesses for example.

Part of our integrated plan in Greater Manchester is to see how we can work together to address these issues. One example of how we plan to tackle runoffs from highways is to install reed beds.

In certain parts of Greater Manchester, there is agricultural runoff as well and that can be significant.

It's important for the company that we're all looking at this collectively together.

We are working with the Government so that customers are not footing the bill for the pollution that is coming through. One example of this is wet wipes, which are the cause of the majority of blockages. Wipes have a huge impact and can cause flooding and that isn't acceptable.

We're looking at biodiversity solutions as well. Alongside building storage tanks to collect rainfall we are exploring options to develop wetlands.

As we move into uncharted technology in the UK, to aid and support that future work, we are investing in jobs for the future through our new apprenticeship and graduate programmes in green engineering technologies. We're going to need people with the skills to manage and maintain these green solutions as we go forward so we are investing in those skills now for the future.

The training is taking place at our Ofsted accredited training centre in Bolton.

The company is also involved in schemes in catchment management to protect and enhance the water environment through managing the surrounding land. We are looking at how to bring different businesses together to look at different catchment approaches so we can manage catchments for water quality differently.

There's [great information on the website](#) that customers can have a look at.

**Q5. How do you plan to drive down water usage when the climate is getting warmer and therefore increases demand for water? How do you plan for sufficient supply of water given the number of new developments that we're seeing across the North West?**

The North West is not classed as 'water stressed' compared to other parts of the country where they have compulsory water metering.

But we know that customers care about how much water they are using and would like to see and understand more.

As part of our plan, we will install 670,000 new smart meters that will give customers information about their water use, giving them confidence to move to a water meter and become more water efficient.

Customers who are on a water meter typically use 21% less than other customers. If customers have that visibility and information, it can help drive down the reduction in water usage.

With climate change the weather is getting drier and the company is looking at how to ensure sufficient water supply for the future.

Every 5 years we produce a [Water Resources Management Plan \(WRMP\)](#) which sets out how we intend to achieve a secure supply of water for our customers. When testing the plan, we considered a range of scenarios and options taking account of uncertainties around climate change, water transfers, the amount water needed, population growth and environmental changes.

This helps us to understand what the risks are in the short, medium and long-term to our water supplies across the region.

Most of our water in the North West comes from reservoirs. These fill quickly when it rains but can also fall quite quickly when it's bright and sunny. Therefore, we need to put in place plans to ensure that we are resilient in the long-term.

Our plan involves developing a number of additional sources of water as well as changing customer behaviour and focusing on our own performance on leakage to get that balance right for the long-term.

In addition, we also look at pinch points on the system. There might be enough water overall, but can we get it to every customer, which is a part of the problem in the South East.

We look at the resilience of all our local networks, our local storage reservoirs and pumping stations and we're looking to improve resilience in any areas that are deemed vulnerable by building new pipes, putting new pumps in place so that we can protect customer supplies in the future.

**Q6. Climate change is upon us and it's not going to go away. We need to be able to store water in a much more efficient way than we currently are. We need to think globally and to the next 100 years. How is United Utilities sharing its resources to other parts of the country, and how far into the future is the company developing its plans?**

The company is not only planning for the next 5 years, but we are planning for the next 25 years and in 50-year increments.

Water can be an emotive issue and people often ask - who owns the water? Is it where the water falls, or does it belong to the UK?

We are taking part in a programme that's being run across the UK to look at water transfers.

We are part of a group called Water Resources West through which we work with several water companies to look at the long-term and to ensure we have a consolidated view across the country.

For the first time, we're looking at how we could meet the national demands for water along with regional demands.

We know the South East is growing faster than any other region in the country, and that they are going to have significant issues with water resources in the future. They've got plans to develop new reservoirs, but there are options that we can provide by enabling the transfer of water from the North West to the South.



There are several options about how we could do that and free up some of the resources that we have in Wales in particular and utilise the natural river system to take some of that water available further south.

But we would never do that by compromising the resilience of our supply in the North West.

In addition, we're looking at how we can develop new supplies for our region, and indeed, how in the future we might import water from another area as well.

National water planning is part of what we do.

**Q7. United Utilities should prioritize leakage when they're reported by customers. It took 5 weeks to resolve a recent issue outside our house with the loss of a lot of water in that delay.**

United Utilities has a target to reach customers in 48 hours. If that didn't happen, it is unacceptable, and we apologise for it.

Customers [can report a leak on a very easy user friendly website](#) and we aim to repair and reinstate within 48 hrs.

Sometimes there's a couple of issues that can cause a delay. The first is, the company is unable to do a live repair, and we have to give customers notice that we're going to turn their water supplies off. Secondly, we may need access to the highway and therefore, we need street work permits to get permission to start digging.

These are rules to protect people but can also cause delays.

We're not always great at being clear with customers about the reasons why those delays may be there. If we haven't done something quickly enough, we hold our hands up and we want to do better. However, sometimes there are other things that are happening, too.

We are using technology to detect low pressure and to detect a leak before customers tell us, and we fix it promptly and responsibly, but we need to do more to be proactive and pre-emptive.

There's investment going into network sensors in artificial intelligence and in acoustic loggers to give us more information about our network, so we can take more interventions and respond even faster.

## Greener

**Q8. When will the Company stop dumping raw sewage?**

There's a media narrative and terminology about the company 'dumping raw sewage.' The company does not dump raw sewage.

We are one of the leading companies in terms of zero serious pollutions.

England has a combined sewage system made up of hundreds of thousands of kilometres of sewers, built by the Victorians, in many urban centres. This means that clean rainwater and wastewater from toilets, bathrooms and kitchens are conveyed in the same pipe to a sewage treatment works.

They have been a feature of the system for 150 years.

However, when there is heavy rainfall, or a big storm, and when the wastewater treatments are overloaded, that extra capacity needs to be released, otherwise it will back up into people's streets and into people's homes.

While combined sewer overflows have been a feature of the system, it does not make them right.

We want to remove combined sewer overflows from the North West in terms of the way that they operate.

Twelve months ago, the Government did a piece of work asking how much it will cost to reduce the operation of combined sewer overflows to an average of 10 spills per overflow per year.

And the cost of that is £56 billion and £20 billion of that is in the North West. That is because it rains more in the region and the North West has got more of those combined sewers than anywhere else in the UK.

The plan that we are putting forward for the next 5 years is going to see us reduce storm flow activations by 60% (*compared to the 2020 baseline*).

The challenges won't be fixed overnight, similar to the transition of electric cars from diesel cars as the infrastructure needs to be put in place first.

That means re-plumbing the North West region and building new infrastructure, which is essentially constructing Olympic sized swimming pools to store the extra water the region gets.

The original systems were not designed for the current population, which is expected to grow further.

United Utilities is hugely motivated and extremely passionate about making this step change in reducing combined sewer overflows. This is why we are putting forward the biggest infrastructure plans in the country to tackle this challenge.

**Q9. How do you identify problems on a surface water system that could cause a problem with a combined sewer? How do you ensure the remedial works are carried out in a reasonable timeframe?**

This is about the interaction between surface water sewers and surface water drains and our foul network.

If the company has a connection with a surface water sewer and we're seeing more water coming in, we can pick that up on our sensor network as something that isn't right.

We have developed 'signature flows' so that we can understand how all of our systems operate under normal conditions. Each time there is something that changes from that, we can see that and try and understand it.

If there's been an ongoing problem with the surface water system and a customer has contacted us or somebody has identified that to us, we will look at that as quickly as we can to try and understand the connectivity.

However, sometimes it's not clear who owns the surface water system. It might be a local authority, or it might be a landowner and sometimes it is an area that is complicated because of that mix of ownership.

**Q 10. Is your 5-year plan for Water Resources Management available to the public, and can you please provide a link?**

We put all of our plans onto our [website](#) including a customer friendly version.

## Healthier

**Q 11. What are you doing to remove lead pipes in the Greater Manchester area?**

We have an extensive programme already underway.

We have mobilized a dedicated team to target and offer a grant for the removal of lead pipe. Between 2020 and 2025, we'll remove around 15,000 across the North West and we've got ambitious plans to double that going into the next AMP.

If a customer has a concern, we offer water efficiency visits to their home and business.

We offer a lead pipe removal program and a grant – capped at £550 – that customers can access for that removal, which is over half the total cost on average. If you have a concern, you can [contact us here](#).

**Q 12. Why should customer bills go up to deal with your dumping of raw sewage?**

The average annual bill today is £417. Going forward that will rise to £512, before inflation, by 2030, a £20 increase each year for the 5 years.

Of that £20, approximately £5 to £6 pounds will be spent on the new infrastructure we need to deliver to improve drainage and to reduce storm overflows.

Any issues arising from the way United Utilities is operating its system or maintenance is the responsibility of the Company. Customers should not, and will not, pay for that.

This is about the fact that the sewers we have today are not sized to deal with the population that we now have in addition to the heavy rainfall that we are now seeing. Those changes in hydraulic capacity are happening right across the North West, and these go back to combined sewer overflows, which have been a feature of the system for 150 years.

This is about developing new hydraulic capacity to deliver, and more importantly, make sure that we've got the right capabilities and support for the population that we're going to see in the North West over the next 25 years.

**Q 13. Why didn't this process to invest in infrastructure start earlier rather than being reactive?**

The water sector has recently come out and said it's sorry because it should have acted quicker.

But there are some factors to consider.

There has been a real focus on keeping water bills low. Bills have not increased over many years, remaining relatively flat.

Now that we are going to deliver a step change in infrastructure into the North West, the largest investment seen since privatisation, there is an impact.

As part of the solutions that we are building, we are recognising the world's temperature is going to increase, and as a result of that we are going to see more rainfall and we are going to see more flooding.

We are responding to those changes by building those capabilities and scaling them for the future.

**Q 14. How does the pay of the CEO and other senior managers reflect the company's performance?**

The senior team is incentivised on the issues that are important to customers including reducing leakage, reducing combined sewer overflows, making sure we haven't got pollution events for example.

As a listed business, we are clear and transparent about this.

We're transparent in terms of the way we report remuneration, and what those targets are.

We went out to customers and asked what they wanted pay and incentivisation to be based on.

It is customers that have told us what they want the senior team to be remunerated on. If we don't deliver some of these targets that we've set out here, there will be financial penalties for us as a business.

There is a strong degree of customer protection through this process, and what that means is, there are two mechanisms by which money is recovered back from the company.

If the company does not deliver on the things that we've set out, such as investments in treatment works in overflows and other particular types of infrastructure, the money will then be refunded to customers and taken back through the bill.

Secondly, we have these stretching performance targets to reduce leakage, to reduce sewer flooding, to encourage people to lower their consumption of water etc. Those targets are backed by financial penalties and financial rewards.

Conversely, if we fail to meet a target, for example if leakage is at a level that is lower than we'd promised through this plan, then, as a result of that, there will be a financial penalty applied to the company. That impacts the company, it impacts shareholders and it impacts management.

So, the contracts that we're entering into with customers through this Price Review plan is to make sure that the plan reflects your priorities, and then, having done that, to make sure that we're incentivized to deliver against those.

We have engaged with over 70,000 customers throughout this process.

The research that we do is statistically valid, and the sample sizes are sufficient for us to be confident that it's reflective of the people that we serve.

All of our customer research on the plan is published on the [website too](#).