



FOREWORD

TO THE WELSH WATER DRAINAGE AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

DRAFT - JULY 2022

Welcome to Welsh Water's Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP). This is our first DWMP and represents a step change in the way we plan for the long term for the benefit of our customers and the environment and counter the combined impacts of climate change, growth and urban creep (the loss of permeable land around our existing buildings), a plan we will update every five years.

Our DWMP is a collaborative long term strategic plan outlining how we intend to extend, improve and maintain a robust and resilient drainage and wastewater system. It is an integral part of our overall company ambition, Welsh Water 2050, which aims to ensure that we become a truly world class, resilient and sustainable water service for the benefit of future generations. The plan will play a crucial role in highlighting where we anticipate risk from growth and climate change, the impact of customer behaviors, the need to meet new tighter environmental regulations, and the maintenance of our assets.

At the heart of our DWMP is restoring capacity in our networks, treatment works and the environment, and over the next 25 years our preferred plan is to focus on the most important parts of this based on the following principles –

- CSOs improvements will be made where we need to reduce impacts of our discharges, we want to prevent harm to the water quality of our rivers and beaches.*
- We will aim to reduce nutrients entering rivers and coastal waters by catchment approaches, innovative permitting and nutrient trading.*
- Wherever possible we will use nature based and low carbon solutions.*
- We will work with others to remove surface water from our combined sewer network wherever possible and in partnership with local authorities and others (ie Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, Wrexham etc.) We will also work with other planning authorities to stop the problem from growing by preventing new surface water being connected to our sewers.*
- We will implement approaches that provide adaptation to the effects of climate change in particular those that reduce the instances of sewer flooding, reduce the risk of flooding and improve the resilience of the service we provide.*
- Enable growth and new development through sustainable connections to our network.*

These are important because our approach will involve targeted interventions that will help deliver maximum benefit and mitigate the environmental harm we may be causing. There are no simple, quick fixes such as removing our reliance on CSOs which is neither practical (it would involve digging up every street causing huge disruption) nor affordable (at an estimated cost of £19 billion). Our preferred approach is adopting sustainable solutions such as RainScope and other nature based, low carbon

approaches. These have added advantage that they will make our networks and the communities we serve more resilient to effects of climate change without significantly increasing our carbon footprint.

*We also want to **sustainably** reduce the amount of nutrients and pollutants getting into our rivers and coastal waters. However in most areas, including our environmentally sensitive special areas of conservation (SACs) we know we cannot make the improvements needed to meet water quality standards on our own and where we do improve water quality it is often at very high financial and carbon cost. We want to develop 'catchment' approaches, that is to establish the improvements needed throughout the area draining to a river or coastal area in partnership with others and where it is beneficial to do so, use nutrient trading to help them meet the highest water quality. This approach means that we can not only work to meet water quality standards but do so in a low carbon, nature-based approach that can help support biodiversity. To do this we will need to work closely with our government and regulators to develop the tools to enable this.*

Finally the sewerage and WWTW system is crucial to enabling sustainable development and growth in Wales, including those affordable developments so important for communities across the area we serve. Without the capacity to accept new development, planning applications will continue to be held up and vital new homes and businesses will be delayed. Wales has commenced Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act meaning that new developments should not drain surface water to the sewerage system except as a last resort, but until we prevent new surface water being drained to sewers we will not have a truly sustainable drainage system. Our preferred plan is to work with Local Authorities through project and planning boards and other collaborative groups so that we can realise together the opportunities to separate flows and provide capacity for the sustainable connections that new developments need, whilst also preventing the problems we have today from becoming worse.

These are some of the key challenges we face and opportunities available to us. We want everyone involved in wastewater and drainage to have an opportunity to shape the DWMP through this consultation. With recent extreme weather events such as flooding, we know that we need to act now. Working together in partnership, we can ensure the outcome is more than just a water company long-term plan but rather a plan that offers the best view of the risks and issues we face as a society, along with agreements on solutions and mitigation that will benefit future generations across all the communities we serve.

Welsh Water Board, 7 July 2022