West Berkshire Council
Resource and Place Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 15 September 2026

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Company updates
3. Clean water update
4. Waste water update



Introductions

Company updates

Annual report key updates

Published 15 June 2026

In the year ending March 2026 we:

- Increased capital investment by 20 per cent to a record £2,680 million. This equates to £7 million every day modernising the infrastructure our customers rely on.
- Reduced by 18% the number of pollution incidents affecting rivers in our region
- Responded 40% faster, on average, to operational incidents (such as burst water mains that interrupt customers' supplies) than in 2024-2025.
- Recruited around 1,000 new staff, growing our workforce by 12% to more than 9,000 to help deliver our investment plans
    - 30% of our recruitment is from 'untapped talent' pipelines including those under 24 and over 50, young black men, care leavers, prison leavers and ex-services personnel.
- Supported more than 560,000 households through our WaterHelp scheme, which offers a discount on bills of between 25 per cent and 99 per cent.
- Provided £260 million of affordability support to customers over the year.

Our biggest upgrade in 150 years

Over the next five years investment of more than £20 billion will reduce leaks and burst pipes, improve our resilience to extreme weather, reduce our impact on rivers and support growth, including:

Fixing hundreds of miles of ageing water mains to cut leakage and reduce disruptive burst pipes

Modernise our wastewater systems to protect rivers.

Upgrade water treatment works and monitoring to ensure safer, cleaner tap water.

Our biggest upgrade in 150 years

Our customers have told us they want clear information about what's being to address leaks, pollution, and water quality.

We have responded to this feedback through:

- information campaigns including videos, social media and press releases
- First nearly £200 million being spent targeting the leakiest areas first, where disruption to supplies and infrastructure has been high.

As we progress, we will:

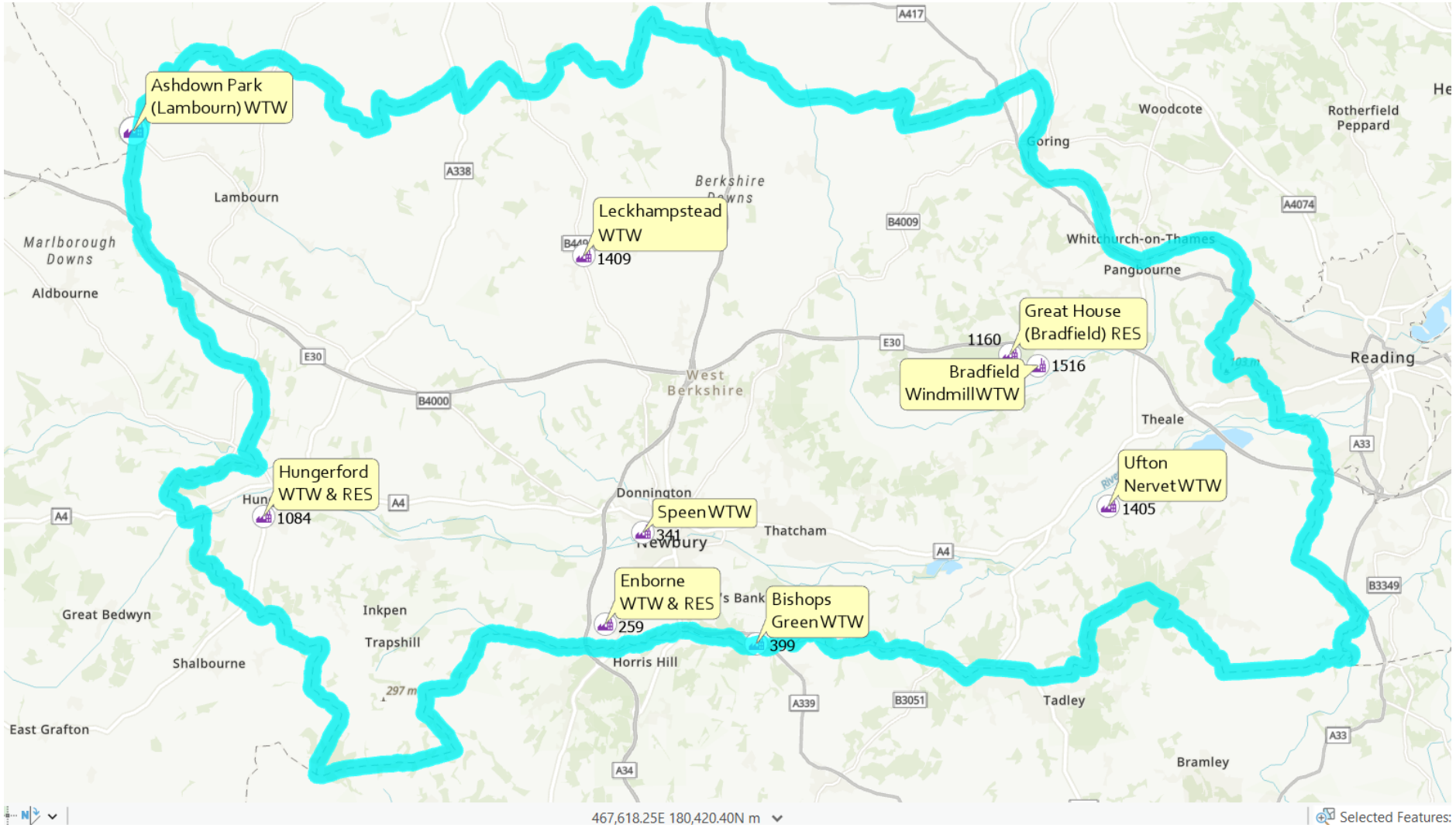
- Provide more detailed local information to individual areas
- Tailored visits to homes and businesses and drop-in sessions where our work is taking place.
- Site visits for elected representatives, to allow you to have informed conversations with the community you represent.



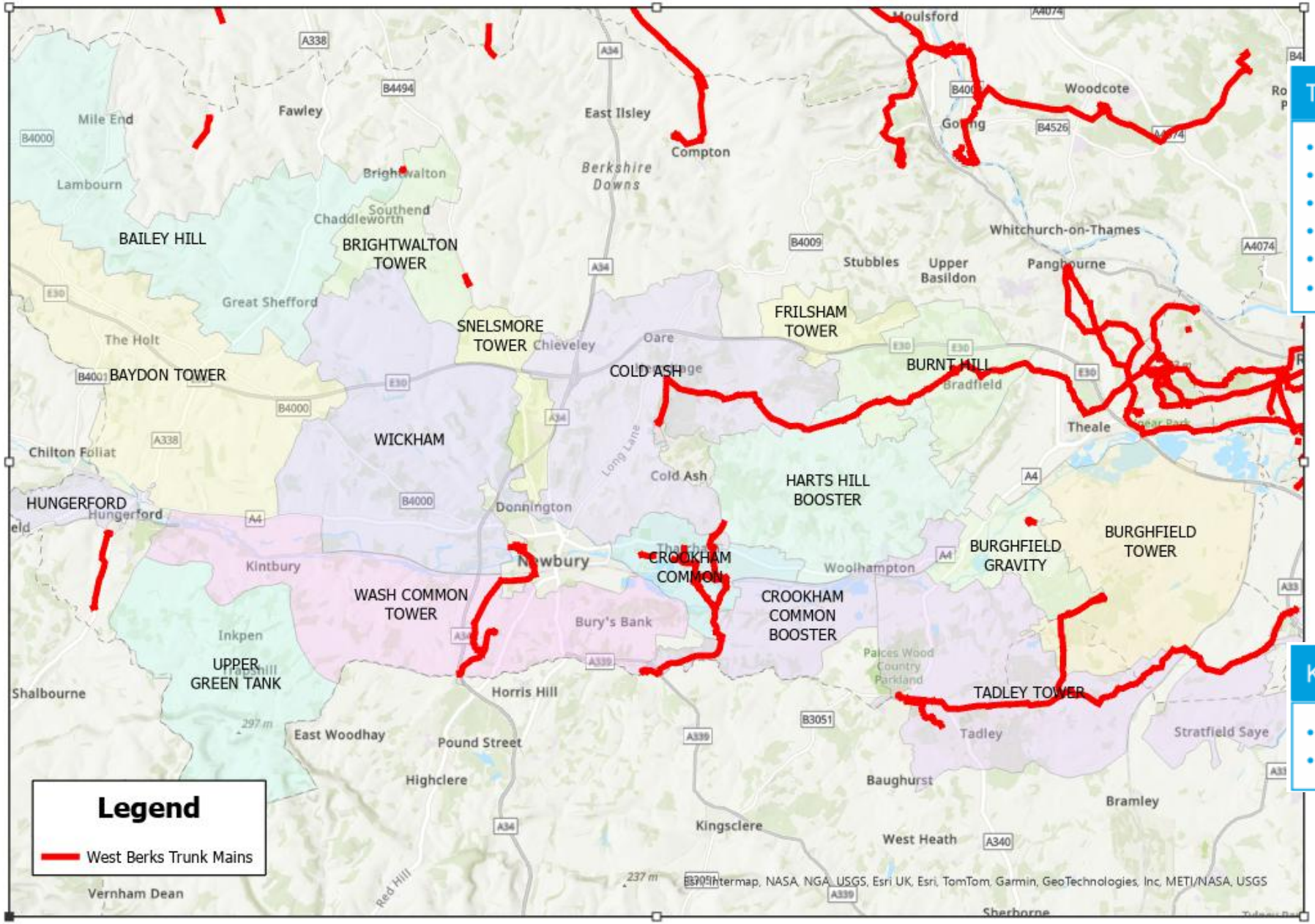
Clean water update

Clean water supplies in West Berkshire

Total daily flow is circa 92 Ml/d, 86% household consumption and 14% non-household



Network overview



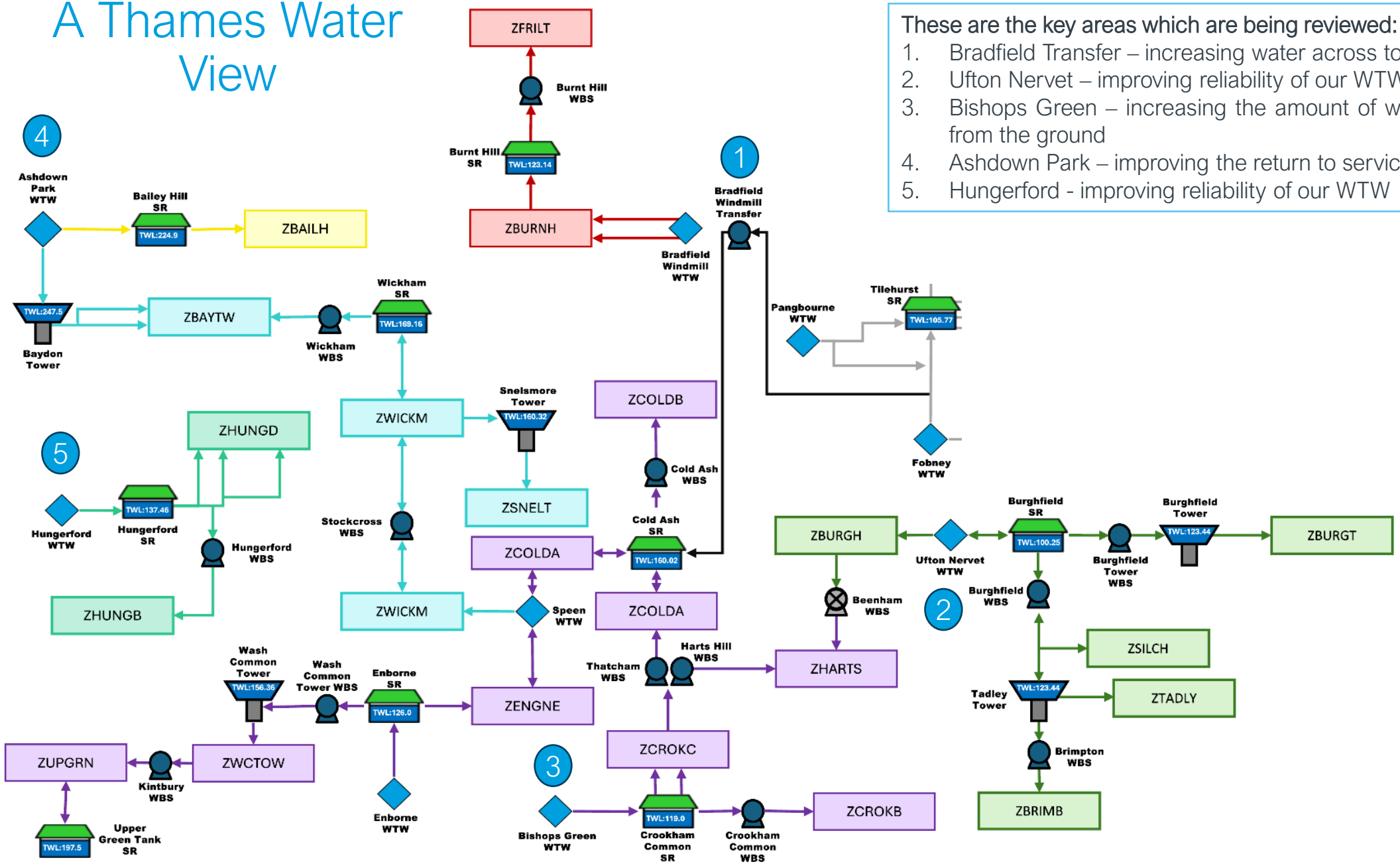
The Zone

- 65 Years - Average Mains Age
- 2,105km of District Main
- 165km of Trunk Main
- 3.8% New Plastic
- 411k Customers
- 167k Properties

Key Challenges

- High mains bursts
- High growth

A Thames Water View

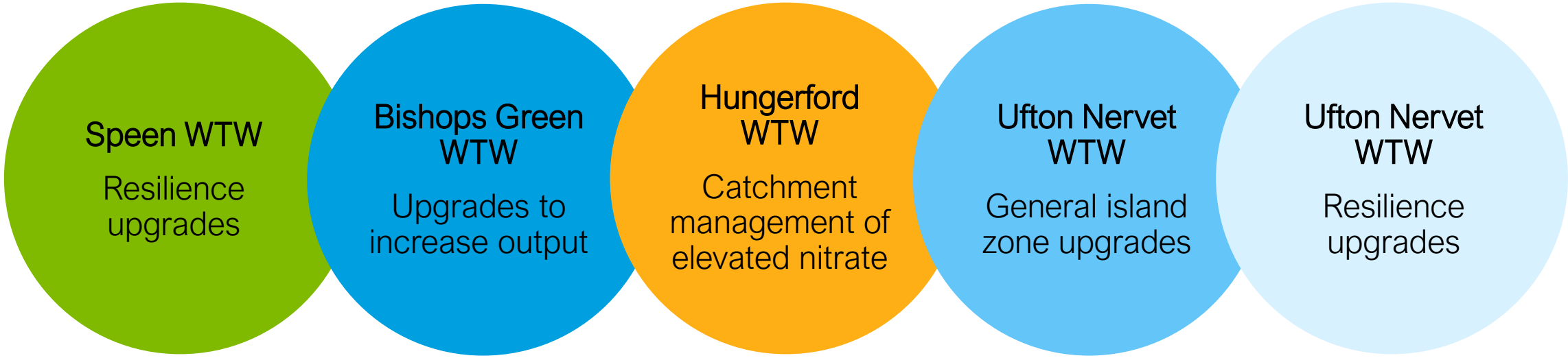


These are the key areas which are being reviewed:

1. Bradfield Transfer – increasing water across to Newbury
2. Ufton Nervet – improving reliability of our WTW
3. Bishops Green – increasing the amount of water we can take from the ground
4. Ashdown Park – improving the return to service time of our site
5. Hungerford - improving reliability of our WTW

Updates since our last visit

Happening now or in progress



Investment plans overview

We're investing £27m in the region to improve customer experience, reliability and ensure compliance with more to come…

Short term
2025-2030

- Upgrades identified by the Sandleford development study
  - New main
  - Pumping capacity upgrades
- Snelsmore tower replacement
- Continuation of Bishops Green catchment mitigation for nitrate
- Ufton Nervet resilience
- East Garston mains replacement

Medium term
2030-235 *

- Enborne Grange WTW
  - increase abstraction pump flexibility
  - Reinforce transfer main
- Increase capacity at Cold Ash reservoir
- Significant trunk main rehabilitation
- Complete final sections of metering programme

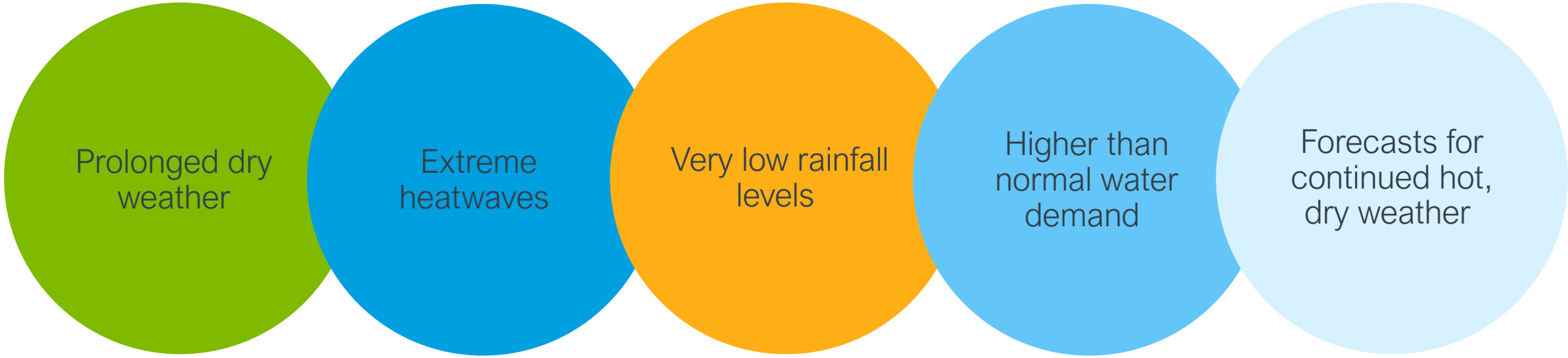
* The AMP9 business plan is still being developed

Long term
2035- 2040

- React to demand possibly reaching "high" in 2030's
  - This would mean a new water resource between Newbury and Reading from 2040.
- Proposal to add a spur from the White Horse Reservoir transfer pipe
  - add resilience to Newbury area
  - Support supply-demand expectations from 2050
- Removal of island zones - customers that can only be fed from one Abstraction location to increase resilience

Drought

A combination of factors in 2026



Water companies operate to an agreed level of service as set out in their Water Resources Management Plans and Drought Plans.

The implementation of restrictions is not an indicator of service failure but a planned response to a prolonged lack of rainfall and is triggered by reduced river flows or raw water stored in our reservoirs.

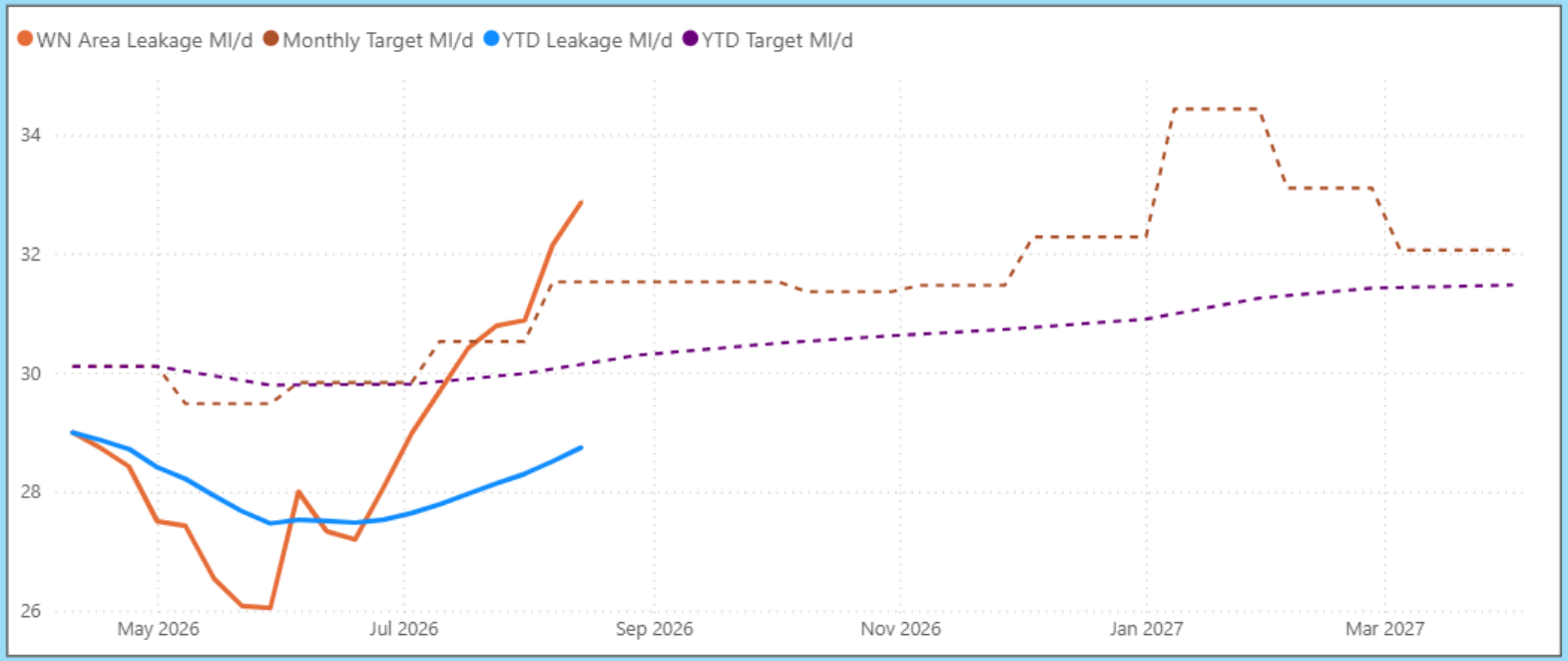
Our response

Our teams continue to work around the clock to:

- Maximise the amount of water available across our network
- Move water around the system to where it is needed most
- Carefully manage reservoirs, rivers and groundwater sources
- Repair more than 1,000 leaks every week
- Use technology including acoustic sensors, satellite imagery and AI to identify hidden leaks more quickly

Temporary Use Ban has delivered a 10% drop in demand since implementation in 2026

Leakage – a real challenge



Leakage Spot Value (Ml/d)	This Month AVG Leakage (Ml/d)	YTD Leakage (Ml/d)
32.86	32.50	28.74
Leakage Spot Value Target (Ml/d)	**This Month Leakage Target (Ml/d)**	**YTD Leakage Target (Ml/d)**
31.52	31.52	30.14
Var to Spot Value Target (Ml/d)	**Var to Monthly Target (Ml/d)**	**Var to YTD Target (Ml/d)**
1.33	0.98	-1.40

Annual Average Target (Ml/d):

31.47

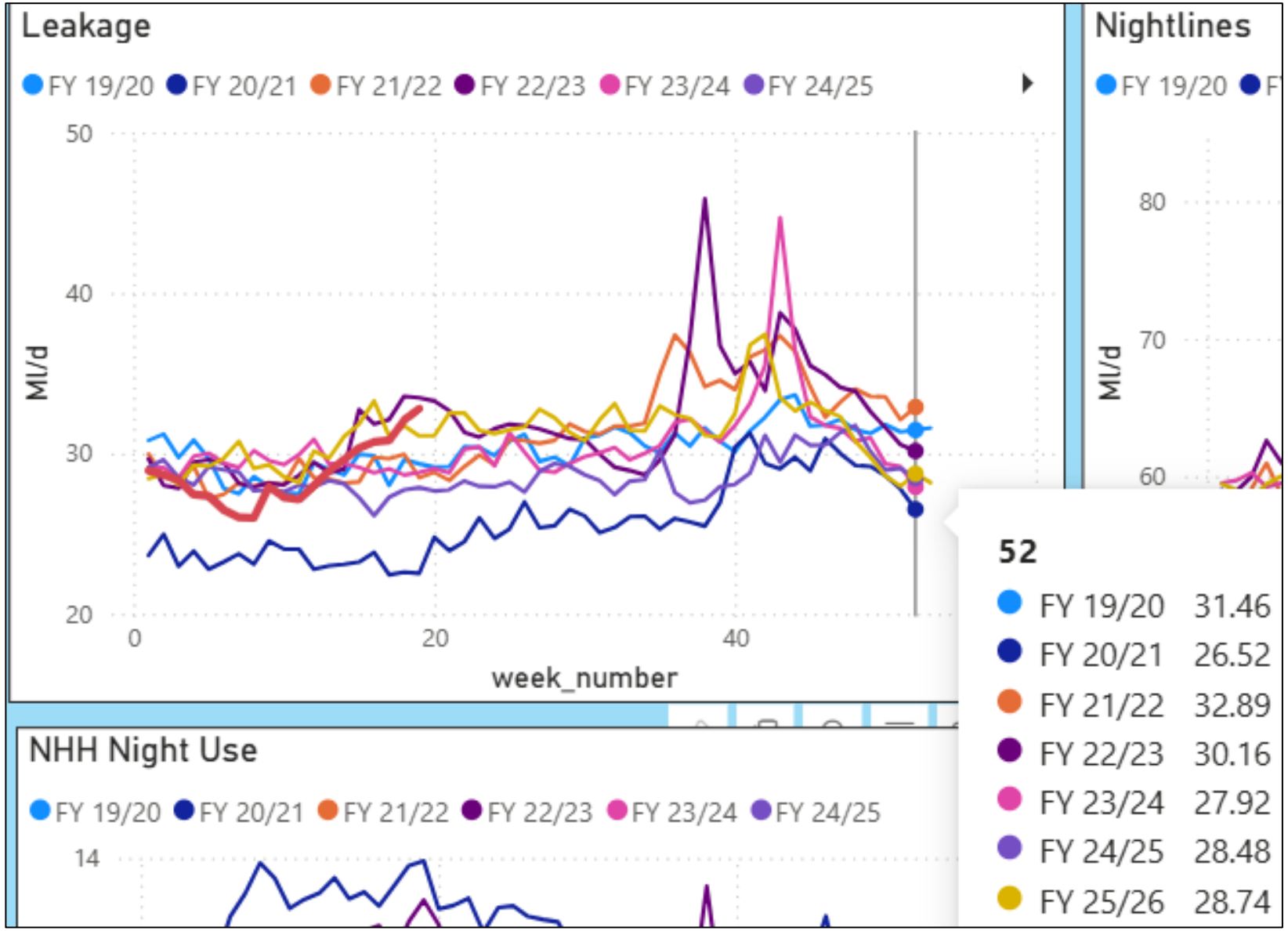
Spot Value Date:

14/08/202...

Region, WN Area

- North London
- South London
- Thames Valley & ...
  - TV1
  - TV2
  - TV3
  - TV4
  - TV5
  - TV6

Leakage


Leakage
FY 19/20
FY 20/21
FY 21/22
FY 22/23
FY 23/24
FY 24/25
50
40
30
20
Ml/d
0
20
40
week_number
Nightlines
FY 19/20
80
70
60
Ml/d
52
FY 19/20 31.46
FY 20/21 26.52
FY 21/22 32.89
FY 22/23 30.16
FY 23/24 27.92
FY 24/25 28.48
FY 25/26 28.74
NHH Night Use
FY 19/20
FY 20/21
FY 21/22
FY 22/23
FY 23/24
FY 24/25
14

Customer focus

The focus for our region is to listen to the customer journey and learn how we can improve the experiences, in particular:

- Reviewing repeat calls
- extended repair dates for visible leaks
- understanding barriers to progressing repairs
- realistic agreements and transparency on what may affect a repair date

Initiatives include:

- Reviewing the information available to customers on the website
- Reviewing the information available to contact centre staff
- Customer surveys and weekly review of responses
- Sharing themes, events and challenges across complaints and operational teams



Customer Calling project

Aiding better information communication on completed work

Customer feedback and complaint data show that poor communication is a major driver of dissatisfaction.

The Customer Calling Project addresses this by introducing proactive customer contact by a technician:

- Understand what has happened
- Find out what happens next
- Give customers opportunity to ask questions
- Reducing the need for customer to chase updates



Waste water update

Wastewater Focus

View from the bridge

Operational

- Improved network resilience and winter readiness
- Removal of unwanted flow and reducing escapes of sewage
- Improving environmental performance (excluding WIRI impact)
- 35% reduction in blockage related pollutions calendar YTD compared with last year

Interventions

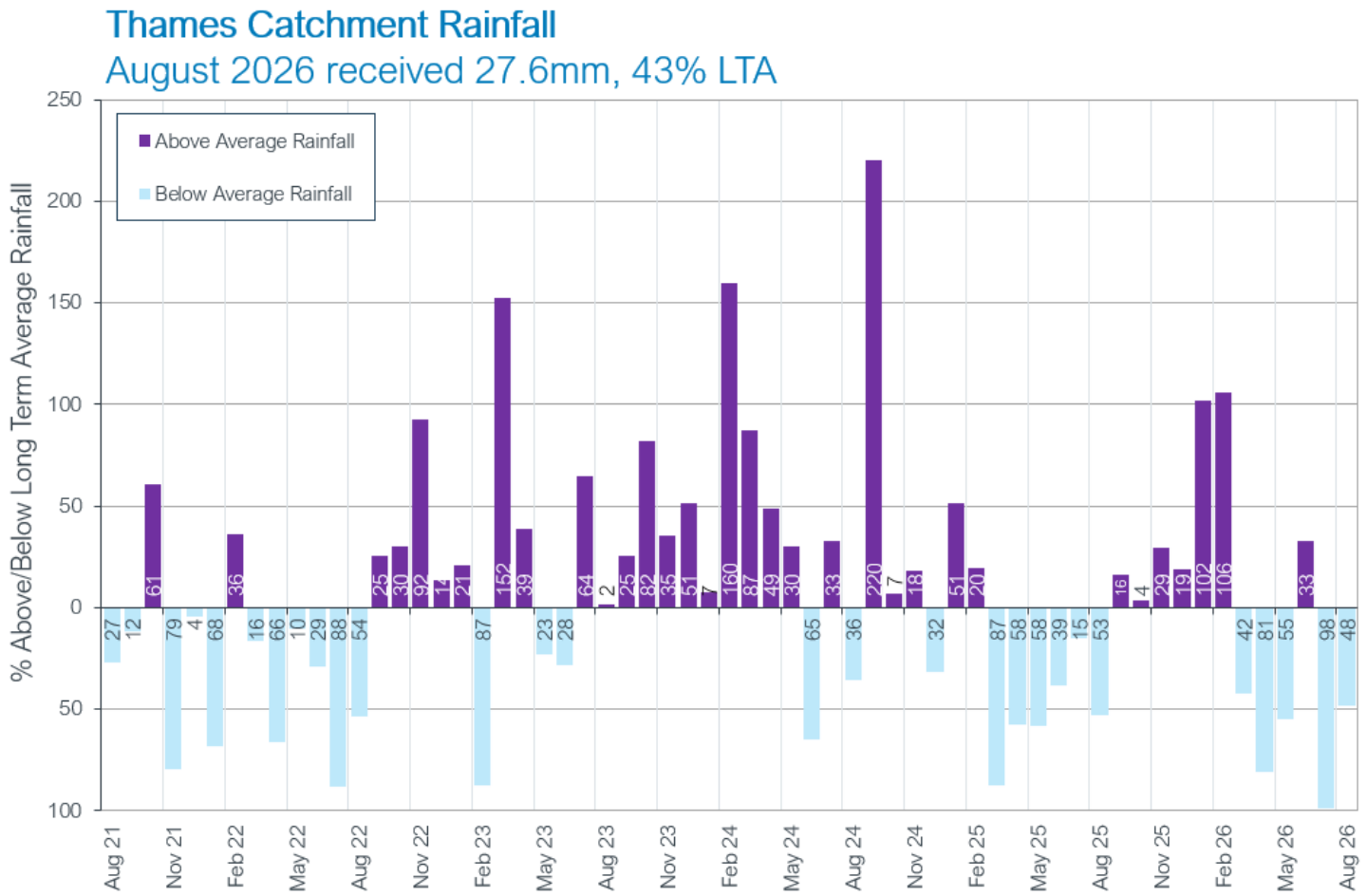
- Planned sewer cleaning 1600km to 2100km
- Driving first time fix with our contractors
- Blockage numbers at all time lows and proactive blockage clearances at all time highs
- Investment in 28 additional vehicles and crews (majority to be deployed across the Thames Valley

Compliance with Licence Condition G (Internal Sewer Flooding)

- Attendance in less than 4hrs, 90% of the time
- Snr Manager reviews of serious and repeat incidents

Thames Catchment Rainfall

Above average rainfall in August 2026



**LTA = Long Term Average. Our LTA is based on historical rainfall from 1883 to 2018.*

December 2025 to February 2026 was **the 4th wettest winter on our record (337mm, 171%)**. This was followed by very dry weather throughout spring. Rainfall exceeded LTA in June 2026, but fell to 2% of LTA in July with less than 1mm of rain across the month. August rainfall was 37.6mm, 43% of LTA.

Rainfall	mm	% LTA*
Calendar Year		
This year: *2026 (up to August 31)*	410	90%
Last year: *2025*	663	90%
Water Year (Oct to Sep)		
This year: *Oct 25 to Aug 26*	675	99%
Last year: *Oct 24 to Sep 25*	619	84%
18-month period		
Mar 25 to Aug 26	906	85%

Data Provider: Water resources team, Asiya Campbell & Joseph Wood

Winter preparedness

Challenges posed by dry summer for infiltration studies

A dry summer can make infiltration in wastewater networks appear lower than it really is because groundwater levels fall and defects such as cracked pipes or leaking joints may not be actively admitting water. This can result in flow monitoring and infiltration studies underestimating the true winter impact, creating a misleading impression of available network capacity.

Challenges for planning for winter

Planning for winter becomes more challenging because it is difficult to predict how quickly groundwater levels will recover and how the network will respond once wetter conditions return. Assets affected by ground movement during dry weather may also be more vulnerable to failure, making it important to maintain focus on known infiltration hotspots and groundwater-sensitive catchments.

Impact of rain following dry summer

When significant rainfall follows a prolonged dry period, networks can experience a sudden increase in infiltration and inflow as groundwater recharges and defects become active. Rain can also mobilise sediments that have accumulated during dry weather, increasing the risk of blockages, sewer flooding, pollution incidents, and higher operational pressures across the wastewater system.

Updates since our last visit

Completed or in progress*

Weston Eastbury and East Garston sewer lining

Identified further sewer lining and manhole sealing in Upper Lambourn Catchment

Woolhampton sewage treatment works blind tank installation*

45.4km of sewer cleaning was completed in FY 24/25

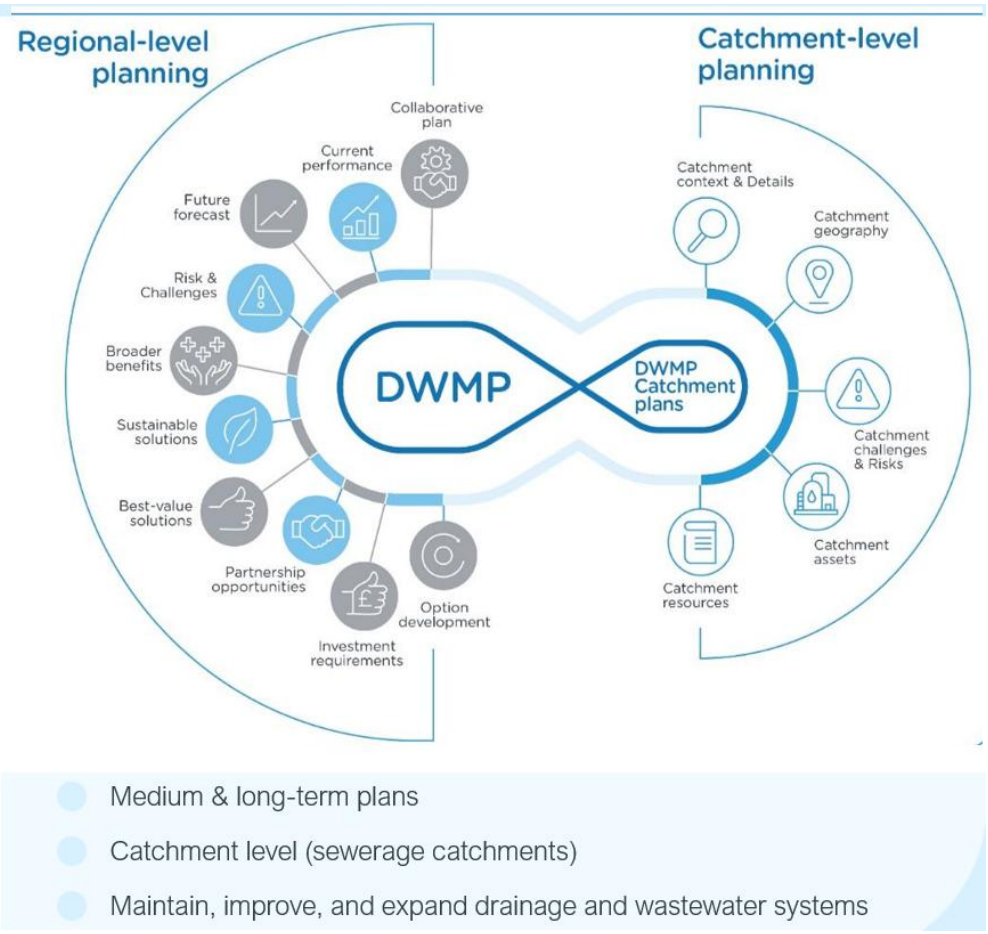
We are currently developing our DWMP

DWMP is our strategic plan that sets out our investment needs for the next 25 years

Stakeholder involvement is continuing throughout the development of our next DWMP. We've already undertaken engagement at both strategic and catchment level, and the next phase will focus on sharing our developing risk assessment outputs and working with stakeholders to understand local risks, evidence and data, alongside opportunities for collaboration as we move into options development.

We'll continue to provide opportunities to engage as the plan develops, supported by our DWMP Portal and more targeted discussions where there are specific local issues or opportunities to explore.



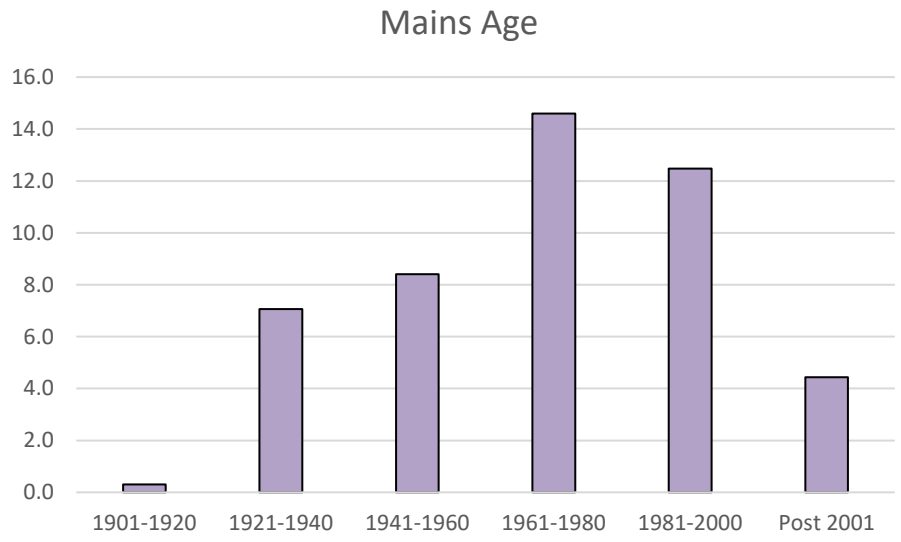




Thank you

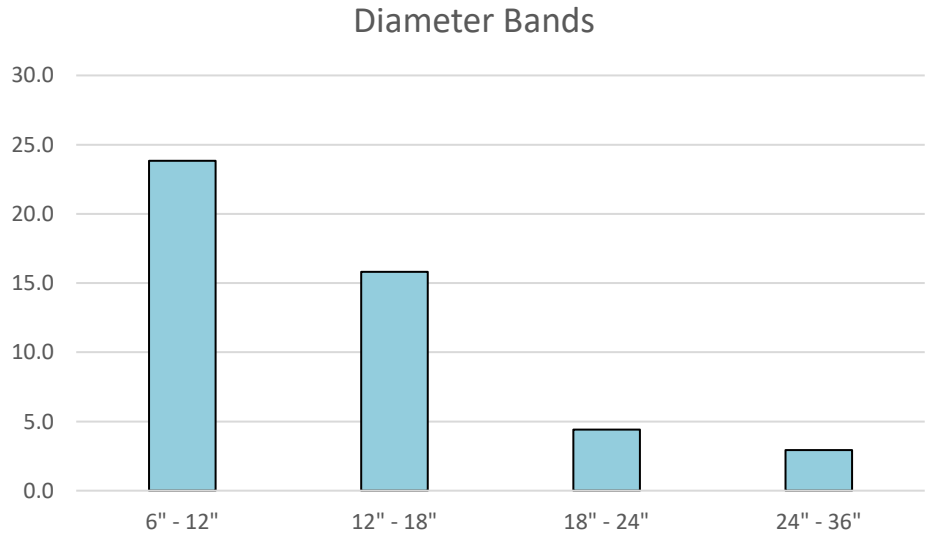
Appendix

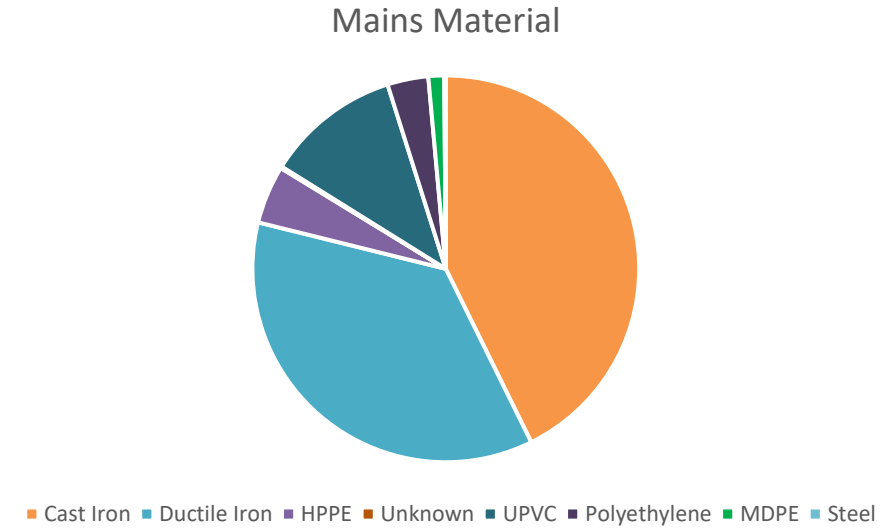
Network overview cont.



West Berkshire's water mains are on average 65 years old with the area being predominantly cast iron and ductile. This compares favourably to our company average age of water mains of 81 years.

This will be reviewed in AMP9 (2025-2030) against burst rates to ensure the correct proportion of mains renewal to manage risk to our customers and increasing leakage.





Upper Lambourne Lining

We have previously observed groundwater entering through private laterals and expect this to be a source of groundwater ingress.

Addressing infiltration to our sewer network is an iterative process, which will need continued monitoring, analysis of performance and the identification of further works, if required.

We have identified a further 410m of Thames Water owned sewers to be lined in the Upper Lambourn catchment, as well as 16 manholes to be sealed. This is being briefed to our delivery team, along with further lining in the village of Lambourn.

Current Plan for Upper Lambourne is to line 410m of mapped sewers upstream of Upper Lambourne 2 SPS (ULAMP2ZZ) marked in red. The blue depicts previously lined sewers in that region.

We have confirmed that all Thames Water sewers in Eastbury and East Garston have been lined, so we'll be focusing on Lambourn village and Upper Lambourn. We expect to brief around 6km of lining in the village within the next month or so, subject to endorsement at Stage Gate 1 in August / September.

In Eastbury and East Garston, we'll be looking to undertake some more investigation work to understand source of inflow to our network given its all been surveyed: e.g., is it through private laterals or other sources.



Stanford Dingley

- We are progressing further investigations to better understand the causes of flooding in Stanford Dingley and identify opportunities for future improvements.

- Stanford Dingley presents a unique set of conditions compared with other locations, with flooding influenced by a combination of groundwater levels and specific storm events. Understanding the interaction between these factors is key to developing the most effective long-term solution.

- The flooding that occurs is typically short in duration, generally receding within approximately 12 hours as conditions return to normal.

- To build a more detailed understanding of the network's performance, CCTV investigations are planned and are currently targeted to recommence in September/October.

- In addition, CCTV surveys are proposed within Frilsham, which drains towards Stanford Dingley. These surveys will provide valuable information to support the wider assessment of the catchment and help inform future investment decisions, subject to funding approval.



Woolhampton STW

- We are delivering a new blind tank at Woolhampton STW, which is expected to be commissioned within the next 5-6 weeks. This investment will increase on-site storage capacity and significantly reduce the need for tankering.
- The additional storage capacity will allow wash water to be retained on site and returned to the treatment process.
- Woolhampton STW operates two MBBR units. As there are no Primary Settlement Tanks on site, regular monitoring and periodic backwashing of the MBBR units is required to maintain treatment performance and regulatory compliance.
- Wash water from these maintenance activities is currently stored within the disused humus tank before being removed by tanker. This is the principal reason for the increased tankering activity currently associated with the site.
- Once the blind tank is operational, reliance on tankering is expected to reduce substantially. Some tankering will remain necessary to support essential operational activities.



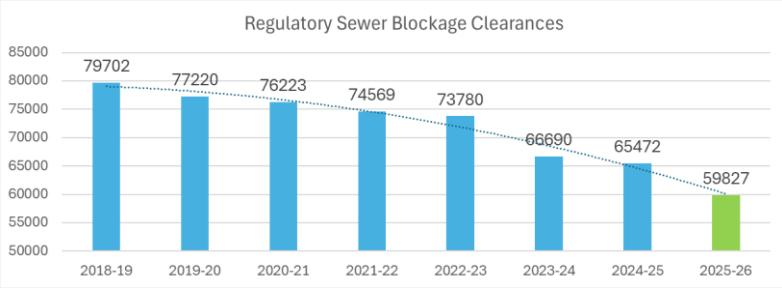
Proactive Sewer Blockage Clearances

Sewer Depth Monitor Alerts are enabling a shift from Reactive Blockage Clearance to Proactive Detection

Proactive Sewer Blockages

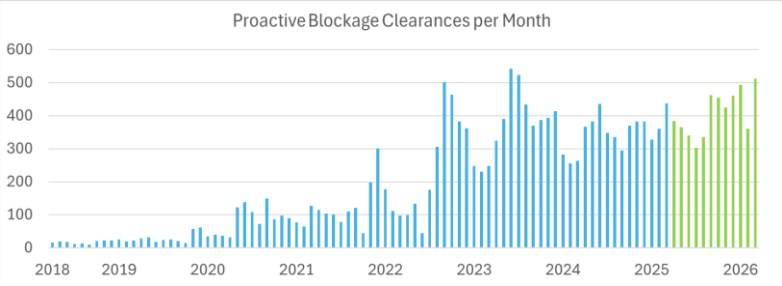
Sewer blockage performance in 2025-26 continued the recent improving trend

2025-26 annual blockage number was almost 20,000 lower than in 2018-19



Since April 2018, 21,495 sewer blockages have been proactively detected and cleared

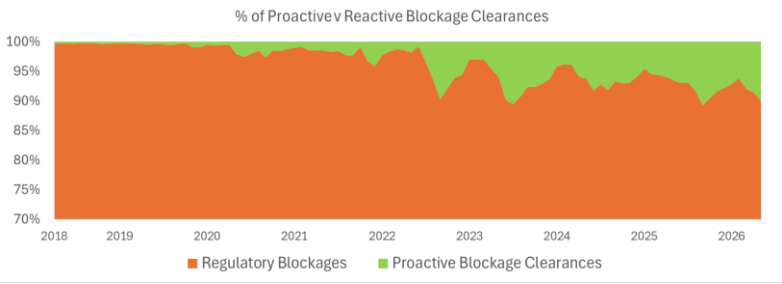
This includes 4,895 in 2025-26, the highest annual total so far



The % of total blockages proactively cleared continues to improve:

- <1% in 2018-19
- 4.3% in 2022-23
- 7.7% in 2025-26

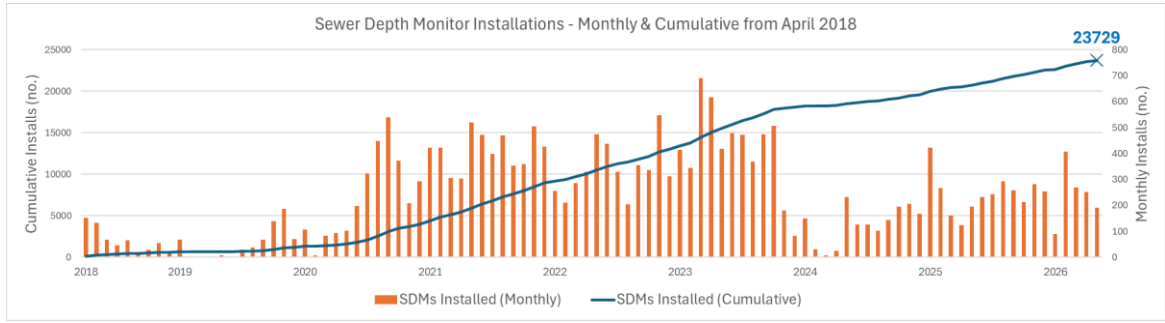
(annual averages)



Sewer Depth Monitors & Smart Waste

Sewer Depth Monitors are the key enabler of Proactive Blockage Detection

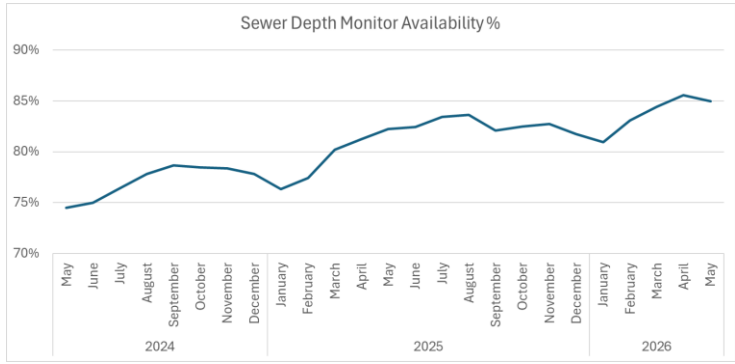
Since the SDM installation programme began in 2018, over 23,700 SDMs have been installed in the wastewater sewer network to proactively detect blockages, using the alert management systems developed by Smart Waste



SDM maintenance is critical to keep installed devices available for effective blockage detection

Since 2024, increased focus on maintenance of existing SDM devices has improved the SDM Availability % from:

- <75% in early-2024, to
- >85% in 2026



Blockage related pollutions reduced by 35% in comparison to same period last year