

GARD suggested answers to the WRSE consultation Jan'23

The WRSE survey can be found at <https://wrse.uk.engagementhq.com/our-consultation>

Suggested answers to multiple choice questions and 'fuller explanations' are highlighted in yellow, like **this**.

1. Please tell us your name.
2. Please tell us your age.
3. Please tell us about your location (town or postcode)
4. What organisation do you represent, if appropriate?

We suggest **concerned resident** or **local resident** or similar

5. Our draft regional plan looks 50 years ahead. It plans to increase resilience to drought and address the potential shortfall in water as a result of climate change, population growth and increased protection of the environment, by taking an adaptive planning approach.

Do you think the draft regional plan addresses the scale of the challenge we face in the future through our adaptive planning approach?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

6. Please explain your answer.

Please use some or all of the following points that you feel strongly about

- **The plan you have presented fails to address or acknowledge the many issues raised in previous consultations. Population predictions are, again, wildly over estimated, compared to the latest government projections, which show the UK population will start falling as soon as the next 10-15 years.**
- **The plan should be sequenced to provide increased supply in the short term, mainly by water transfers, until long term demands can be better determined.**
- **The sections on climate change fail to address the overall effect of climate change - at times, more water will be available to recharge aquifers and existing storage. Full aquifers will last much longer through dry periods, yet this is largely ignored.**

- *As stated in previous consultations, this plan is not adaptive - by advocating construction of the largest infrastructure development right at the start, the plan becomes fixed. This is not what I believe the regulators intended when asking for a plan that could be adapted over time.*
- *The plan fails to adequately show how the environment local to the reservoir site would be protected or, indeed, improved as required by law. Given, in 2022, the upper Thames failed to sustain even existing reservoirs without requesting excessive extraction under drought permits, it is unclear how levels in the proposed new reservoir will be maintained. This is not resilience.*
- *Plans for better water recycling and leakage and demand reduction are completely inadequate. The plan fails under all the criteria you have outlined*

7. Our draft regional plan has considered the needs of other sectors and how their demand for water could be met in the future.

Do you support us continuing to work with other sectors so our regional plan fully embeds their future needs and includes appropriately-funded solutions to meet them?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

8. Please explain your answer.

- *Please include other sectors as stakeholders at board level, like other water groupings such as Water Resources East do.*
- *Currently, the solutions are designed to benefit water company shareholders rather than customers. This needs to be visibly and urgently addressed.*

9. The draft best value regional plan includes investment in new water supplies and activity to reduce the demand for water.

The draft plan identifies that nearly 60% of the water needed by 2075 could come from demand management activities. This includes reducing leakage by at least 50%; extensive water efficiency through smart metering, customer behaviour change and new government policy; and the continued use of temporary restrictions on water use during periods of drought. The rest needs to come from a mix of new supplies.

Do you think the draft regional plan strikes the right balance between reducing the demand for water and developing schemes to provide new water supplies?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

10. Please explain your answer.

Thames Water in particular need to invest much more in:

- *Leakage reduction*
- *Demand reduction by improved water efficiency*
- *Wastewater treatment*

At a minimum, they should be required to achieve the sector average in each of these areas. They should commit to meeting the Government target for per person consumption by 2050.

By 2075, the UK population, including that of the southeast, will be decreasing. Demand should be falling, rather than rising.

11. The draft best value regional plan promotes increased collaboration between water companies in the development of new water sources and the construction of more transfers to move water around the region and share it between companies.

Do you support the increased collaboration between the water companies in the South East and other regions, through the development of shared resources and an enhanced network to transfer water around the region and between regions?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

12. Please explain your answer.

- *Please stop talking about this and start doing it.*
- *The need for regional transfers has been known for many years, yet nothing has been done.*
- *If climate change is as you predict, the need is even more urgent. In 2022 we saw the Thames headwaters dry up and move several miles downstream. We may face a period where future permitted abstractions are only a fraction of current levels due to environmental considerations.*
- *Your own literature points out that the Southeast is the driest part of the UK, so just get on with it.*
- *The fact that the Romans developed better regional water transfer systems than you have speaks volumes.*
- *Specifically, your plan should show a start to the Severn-Thames transfer before 2030, and an advancement of the Grand Union Canal phase 2 water transfer before any consideration of building the Abingdon Reservoir is made.*

13. If you have any other comments or feedback you would like to give us, please provide further details here.

- *We have seen consultation after consultation, with so many issues raised that have been simply ignored. It is very hard to identify where changes have been made to plans because of consultations - so what exactly is the point? Is this just a box ticking exercise so that you can say you have consulted? Please listen to respondents.*
- *Where in the plan is technological innovation? After the shocking and continuous reporting of sewage discharges, water companies are going to have to invest heavily in better water treatment. This should produce large amounts of water that can be extracted for use further downstream in the Thames, closer to point of use. Why isn't this acknowledged more in the plan?*
- *The move to net zero will produce an abundance of cheap low carbon energy soon. At times, there will be an overabundance. We are already seeing systems being paid to shut down because their energy is not needed. Why not use this energy to power several desalination plants and/or water transfer schemes? These systems could even be used to load balance the national grid.*