

## **Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee**

### **Draft Budget 2020-21**

#### **Written submission from Scottish Water**

Thank you for your recent letter requesting an update on Scottish Water's current and future plans on preventative spending to deliver economic and health benefits.

Our current and future plans are set out in our 2015-2021 Delivery Plan which we update annually. In this we highlight that to meet our customers' expectations we focus on the following three areas:

- Providing continuous high quality clear, fresh drinking water, ensuring all our customers can turn on their taps to receive a safe and reliable supply, everywhere in Scotland;
- Protecting and enhancing the environment of Scotland through investment in our waste water systems and good operational practices; and
- Supporting Scotland's economy and communities by investing in our assets to meet new demand for our services

In our Delivery Plan we set out that in the 2015-2021 period we will invest £3.9 billion in maintaining and further improving our services. As the services we provide are essential to protecting Scotland's health and enabling sustainable economic growth all our expenditure could be considered as preventative spending to deliver economic and health benefits. I have highlighted some specific examples of our activities that may be of interest.

#### **Sustainable Land Management**

Sustainable land management is an activity we undertake to protect and improve the quality of source water in the catchments which supply our water treatment works. Improving the quality of source water increases the reliability of our supply and reduces the treatment processes that we have to undertake, thereby saving energy, chemicals and cost.

In the past year we have focussed on sixteen catchments that supply our water treatment works to assess condition of the land around watercourses and have worked with private land owners to complete 36 interventions to improve the quality of the source water and improve the catchment.

#### **Leakage**

The water, energy and chemicals it takes to produce and distribute high quality clear, fresh drinking water every day has a cost and an impact on the environment.

Since 2006 we have been successful in reducing leakage by over 55% and have reached what is termed the 'economic level of leakage'. While we are at the point at which reducing leakage further costs more than the savings it generates, we continue to reduce leakage year-on-year as we find innovative solutions to reducing the costs of finding and fixing leaks.

## **Water efficiency**

We have completed an extensive water efficiency trial in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust, and are focussing on community engagement activities to inform and motivate households to save water. The aim of these activities is to reduce water usage leading to reduced energy and chemical usage.

## **Your Water, Your Life campaign**

To help promote a healthier lifestyle and prevent more plastic bottles entering the environment, we are continuing with our Your Water, Your life campaign. As part of this campaign we are creating an initial network of 70 water refill taps across the country to offer people access to fresh, clean drinking water at the push of a button.

## **Improving the resilience of our drinking water supplies**

To ensure our customers receive a continuous supply of high quality drinking water we have been investing in a number of projects that will increase the resilience of our networks.

The Ayrshire Strategic Resilience Scheme was launched by Ministers in December 2015 and, when complete, will provide improved water supply resilience to around 85,000 customers across Ayrshire.

We are also investing to ensure a more resilient supply of fresh water in parts of Edinburgh and Livingston, by building a new 7-mile water supply pipe which runs through the Pentland Hills. This will benefit 165,000 customers in and around Scotland's capital by providing a two-way treated water link between Marchbank Water Treatment Works near Balerno and Glencorse Water Treatment Works near the Pentland Hills Regional Park.

## **Energy**

Our energy strategy is aligned with the Scottish Governments' Hydro Nation ambition for a greener and stronger economy and is a key part of our drive to continually reduce costs and our carbon footprint.

Our approach is focused on:

- Hosting private renewable investment - we host private investment in renewables on our land where it provides a good return for customers and is compatible with providing high quality services.
- Reducing consumption - we have made changes to operational practices and our asset base to reduce energy consumption. We are exploring and piloting long-term, low energy, low carbon treatment solutions.
- Increasing self-generation - we have increased the renewable generation capacity of our own assets to 63GWh/annum, almost three times our capacity in 2013. The portfolio of assets has been diversified to include hydro, wind, biomass, photovoltaic solar, combined heat and power (CHP) and biomass boilers.
- Electric-powered vehicles - we have launched a trial of electric-powered vehicles to the Scottish Water vehicle fleet and now have charging points at

numerous sites across Scotland as part of our drive to help reduce carbon emissions. We have also been testing our first hydrogen powered vehicle.

### **Low carbon heat – The Stirling District Heat Network**

We have developed in partnership with Stirling Council an energy hub in Stirling that will deliver low-carbon heat to the city. The project which harnesses energy from our sewers through a mixture of leading-edge technologies is the first site in the UK to deliver heat in this way. The project was recently visited by the First Minister and was recognised as an important step forward in tackling the climate emergency.

### **Sustainable Growth Agreement**

We continue with our work with developers so that the surface water of new developments is managed through sustainable urban drainage systems. These systems support biodiversity and place-making for local communities.

We are also working with SEPA and Local Authorities across Scotland to deliver integrated catchment studies and develop surface water management plans that seek to prevent future flooding, and the accompanying economic and health consequences.

We have formed the Edinburgh and Lothians Drainage Partnership with the Scottish Government, SEPA and local authorities to plan for future growth and changes in climate that impact on how the area's waste water and surface water is processed. This new partnership will work together to find innovative and effective ways to tackle rainwater management, flooding, flood risk and growth that will impact the area's infrastructure.

The partnership follows in the footsteps of the successful Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership, and we will continue to explore partnerships in other areas across Scotland where appropriate.

### **Preventing sewer flooding caused by blockages**

Flooding from sewers can pollute the environment as well as impact on the health and wellbeing of our customers. The majority of sewer flooding is caused by blockages resulting from the disposal of inappropriate items such as wipes and fats being flushed down the toilet or poured down sinks and drains.

As well as our "*Keep the cycle running*" campaign, which encourages people to stop and think about what they dispose of through the sewer system, we have launched our first ever proactive drive to reduce the amount of fats, oils and grease being put into the sewer network in St Andrews. Here we have worked in partnership with environmental inspectors to focus on local food businesses by visiting and educating them about the importance of using grease traps to prevent these substances from entering the sewers. The campaign has proved so successful we have expanded it to include a number of businesses in Cupar and at the Quayside in Dundee.

I trust the above examples provide you with insight into the wide range of activities we undertake as part of our essential public service for the public health and economy of Scotland.