



Working together to create sustainable communities

The UK's population has grown by 8.7m people in 20 years. By 2050, the population in the South East is predicted to increase by another 19% to 25%.

This means more housing development, which can lead to a reduction in green, open spaces. This requires us need to think about new water solutions to minimise the risk of flooding, pollution and water shortages to the region and its economy.

Did you know?

We're re-engineering a 40,000 km sewer system that mixes rainfall, runoff and sewage.

We're also engaging with them to tackle challenges such as nutrient neutrality (in the Solent and Stodmarsh areas), the influx of surface water runoff entering our sewers and the risk of pollution incidents.

Did you know?

We published our sustainable development policy in April 2022, explaining how property developers can work with us to promote water efficiency and neutrality for new homes.



Having more of a say

While water companies are not statutory consultees on planning applications, we take an active role by responding when local planning authorities choose to consult with us. There are widespread calls for us to become statutory consultees for applications that relate to water through a change in legislation.

We're lobbying for changes to building regulations and working alongside local planning authorities to influence housing developers to include water efficiency and water reuse measures in new homes, particularly in Sussex North.

Did you know?

The government has set a new Future Homes Standard which requires all new-build homes to produce 75 to 80% less carbon emissions than homes delivered under current regulations.

Our **Future Growth Team** has been set up to focus on emerging development so we know where we need to think about more urgent changes to our infrastructure. By working with developers, local planning authorities and other landowners to agree on shared environmental commitments and goals we can better protect and enhance local environments, introducing nature-based and sustainable solutions wherever possible.

For example, we're focused on:

- Supporting delivery of high-quality homes that are water-efficient, sustainable, healthy, safe and comfortable from 2025 onwards
- Helping to create developments that are nature-rich, resilient, healthy well designed and beautiful by 2025
- Using low-carbon production and construction methods on our assets by 2050 with substantial progress by 2025 and 2030
- Businesses operations in line with the Race to Zero: net zero by 2050 with a 50% reduction by 2030.

We're taking a long-term view on development and water neutrality issues:

- Review and contribute to the development of local and neighborhood plans to identify key growth areas
- Assessing the impact of planning proposals and applications on our network to identify investment needs, where we are brought in to consult by the local planning authority
- Drawing from what we learn from our management planning processes to develop collaborative solutions that have less dependency on infrastructure and add natural capital value.

Sustainable development policy

We published our sustainable development policy in April 2022, explaining how property developers can work with us to promote water efficiency and neutrality for new homes.

For developments that can demonstrate meeting high standards of water efficiency, such as 100 litres per person per day, we waive our new connection charge. Details can be found at southernwater.co.uk/developing-building/connection-charging-arrangements.



Meet Sandra Norval, our Future Growth Lead

Sandra is Co-Chair of the Waterwise Strategic Objective Group on Water Neutrality which makes sure that Southern Water's experience of the Water Neutrality Position Statement is captured to develop further guidance for the future. She is also leading the Water Sector stream of the Ofwat funded Enabling Water Smart Communities Project, working with colleagues across the industry and with key stakeholders to shape the future of development.

We also support the work of The Future Homes Task Force, which contains a variety of representatives from across of the development and construction sectors who shape new homes, including: government, housebuilders, utility providers, material suppliers and environmental groups. The task force has overseen the development of the Delivery Plan, which holds UK housebuilders accountable to reach a set of environmental goals. You can read more about the Future Homes Delivery Plan.

Defra recommends sustainable drainage systems for new developments

"You may have read recently that the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) has recommended that new building developments may soon be required to include sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). This recommendation, part of a recent government review, also means that the 'right to connect' surface water run-off to the sewer network will become conditional upon having an approved drainage system in place.

"It also recommends that developers must design to eliminate surface water, and water companies must be consulted on drainage system approval decisions. This will help us protect the capacity in our network and reduce additional pressures from storm water entering our drains.

"Features like soakaways, wetlands and permeable surfaces as well as more use of water butts, will help slow the flow of rainwater entering the system, reducing the use of storm overflows.

"We're continuing to work closely with partners in communities, through our Clean Rivers and Seas Task Force. It's six pathfinder projects are trialling new nature-based solutions in Kent, northern Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and East Sussex.

"We recently committed to provide 1,000 water butts to homes in Gurnard on the Isle of Wight, following a successful trial in the village of Havenstreet and we're also looking to install SuDS at 47 schools across our region. We look forward to discussing this further with government and our communities."