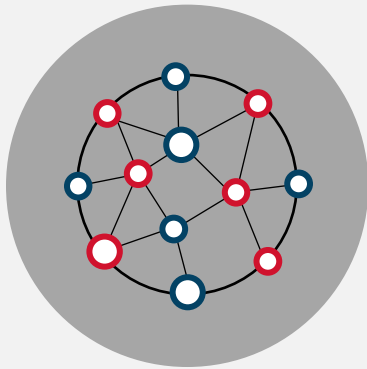


The UK Water Partnership

Newsletter

Issue No 3: January 2024



*Pooling **knowledge and resources** to address global water challenges*



*Supporting research excellence and promoting **collaborative innovation***



*Tapping into the **\$500 billion global water market***

We are here to provide leadership and a unified approach

The UK Water Partnership was established in 2015 to provide a strategic vision for the development and growth of the UK water industry. The Partnership brings together diverse water industry and related organisations in a single coherent alliance, promoting mutual understanding, cooperation and coordination.

Our planet is facing an unprecedented combination of water security and resilience challenges. We are supporting the development of sustainable solutions and ensuring that the UK's experts, innovators and entrepreneurs are at the forefront of the global response.



THE UK WATER PARTNERSHIP

CONTENTS

2 Welcome from UKWP Chair Sarah Hendry CBE

3 UK Water Industry Summit signals a new era of collaboration

5 Information for members

- Share your case studies
- Dates for the diary
- A message from DBT

6 Progress reports on existing strategic workstreams:

- Circular Economy
- Greenhouse Gases
- Public Value of Water
- Water Resilient Places
- Digital Water
- Water Resilience

8 Thought leadership piece: AI within reach – a new whitepaper from Aiimi



WORLD WATER-TECH
INNOVATION SUMMIT
London, February 21-22, 2023

JOIN US IN LONDON

#WorldWaterTech
worldwatertechinnovation.com



aiimi

AI WITHIN REACH

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR AI TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACED BY THE WATER INDUSTRY.

PRODUCTIVITY / PERFORMANCE / EXPERIENCE

- AMPS DELIVERY.
- CLIMATE CHANGE.
- RESILIENCE.
- TRUST.
- AFFORDABILITY.

- QUICK-START.
- STRATEGY.
- INNOVATION.
- AUTOMATION.
- INSIGHTS.



A word from our Chair, Sarah Hendry CBE

Welcome to the third edition of our new series of newsletters designed to keep our members up to date with the latest news, views and developments from the UK Water Partnership.

I'd like to start by paying tribute to all of those who attended and contributed to our UK Water Industry Summit in October, particularly our hosts Arup. It really was a remarkable event, marking, in my view, a step change in our efforts to create the conditions for the industry-wide collaboration that is essential if we are to successfully tackle the complex challenges facing the sector, and society as a whole. You can find a summary of the event here, as well as recordings of all of the contributors and their presentation slides here .

While the need for greater collaboration has been an ongoing theme for some time, I witnessed a tangible sense of purpose, energy and determination in the room, a pooling of ideas in pursuit of a shared agenda and common goals.

It was particularly pleasing, in an election year, that Rebecca Pow MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary at Defra, was with us as our keynote speaker, adding her support to our work and seeing at first hand the commitment of the water sector to unite to tackle the challenges it faces head on.

This commitment, the key output from the Summit, took the form of a Statement of Intent. Signed by the UK Water Partnership, British Water, UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR), Future Water, the Water Industry Forum and Spring, the Statement recognises that, by working together, our six organisations can be more effective, individually and collectively, in achieving our goals.

Crucially, the Summit has already translated our commitment to collaboration into reality, with joint planning sessions in December, most importantly to trigger the development of a Water Innovation Strategy to be published later this year, in which we will share our resources and expertise to help speed up the delivery of the collaborative innovation that is so vital for success.

Finally, on a personal note, I was delighted that one of the priorities identified at the Summit is the need to encourage and develop the future talent and skills that will be the lifeblood of our efforts going forward. For this reason, I was so impressed by Cassia Pickard's contribution to the Summit. Cassia, a Graduate Water Consultant at Arup, spoke with passion about her work and her goals and is a shining example of how the water industry can attract the brightest talent, energised to make a lasting contribution in an exciting sector, that can make a difference to people around the world.

We hope that you find the content in this newsletter interesting and informative. If you have any questions or feedback, don't hesitate to contact eve.oakley@theukwaterpartnership.org



UK Water Industry Summit signals a new era of collaboration

Six of the UK water industry’s leading membership organisations have come together to herald a new era of collaboration to tackle the complex challenges facing the sector – and to take advantage of the opportunities that these challenges present.

At the UK Water Industry Summit in October, The UK Water Partnership, British Water, UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR), Future Water, the Water Industry Forum and Spring all signed a Statement of Intent, committing themselves to work closely together on a range of key initiatives and programmes, to drive innovation, and to define and deliver solutions. The joint signatories stated that “this collaboration will help the UK water sector to deliver a reliable supply of safe, clean water, while protecting the environment and adapting to changing conditions.”



The collaboration will embrace thought leadership, research, development, innovation and application and include:

- Sharing of work programmes to explore areas of mutual interest.
- Coordination on ‘One Voice’ statements in areas of common interest.
- Participation in an annual joint ‘water collaboration summit’ to share knowledge and experience and to agree and deliver programmes of work.
- Exploring more opportunities to promote UK water expertise internationally.
- Connecting resources and sharing knowledge to review, update and build upon the UK 2050 Water Innovation Strategy to ensure it remains current and valid.

Hosted by Arup at its Charlotte Street headquarters in London, the Summit was attended by a cross section of organisations and stakeholders from across the UK water industry, including Government, water companies, consultants, contractors and many others.

The keynote speaker, Rebecca Pow MP, Minister for Water within Defra, added her support and called on the industry to seize the exciting opportunities ahead, and to share its work more broadly with the public. The other speakers on the day were:

- Rosemary Greenhill who provided the Scottish Government’s perspective.
- Nigel Watson from Northumbrian Water who emphasised the need for transformation through innovation to solve challenges.
- Nicola Thomas and Gail Davies-Walsh who gave a Welsh perspective on the benefits of bringing government and industry together to act for river health and water quality.
- Carly Perry presented Spring’s Water Innovation Strategy,
- Steve Salvin, the CEO of data consultancy Aiimi, provided insight into how digital twins, AI and machine learning tools have the potential to significantly improve delivery within the industry
- Cassia Pickard, who shared her professional journey, and illustrated how young and diverse talents can be fostered, retained and multiplied, to develop and expand the sector.

UK Water Industry Summit continued...

The Summit defined five areas that collaborative working among the six, and others, could help address more effectively:

- River Health and Catchment Management
- Future Talent and Skills
- Customer Engagement and Trust
- Collaboration and Water Innovation Strategy
- Data and Digital

Four common challenges for each were also identified, namely collaboration, communication, resilience and funding. The topics were discussed in workshops to develop the starting point for a collaborative strategy, which have already been progressed by the co-hosting organisations in joint planning sessions in December.

Sarah Hendry CBE, Chair, UK Water Partnership concluded that: “The Statement of Intent represents a game changing moment, but it’s vital that intent turns into concrete action, and I’m delighted that we have already made a fast start following the Summit. 2024 promises to be a year of progress and achievement.”

Recordings of all of the Summit contributors and their presentation slides can be accessed [here](#).

A copy of the Statement of Intent can be found [here](#).



Following the summit

Following the commitment made at the Water Summit in October, the signing organisations (British Water, Future Water, Spring, UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR), Water Industry Forum and The UK Water Partnership) met on Friday 8th December to discuss how to take forward their commitment to work together more closely and move forward with a common goal.

Specifically, the leaders of the organisations discussed how they can move forward together in relation to the five priority challenges areas selected at the Water Industry Summit.

The UKWP will continue to share updates as the collaborative work with these six organisations progresses. It is also emphasised that this work aims to create an inclusive group working across the sector in order to better tackle the challenges it faces. Therefore, if your organisation would like to know more, please contact any of the signing organisations for more information.



Call for Water Resilience Case Studies

The UKWP, in collaboration with the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), is on the lookout for new pioneering case studies to feature in an updated version of our Water Resilience White Paper.

Your contribution will spotlight the UK's leading edge in addressing water resilience globally. From nature-based solutions to digital tools and climate action initiatives.

Selected case studies will also gain traction and visibility at the prestigious World Water Tech Innovation Summit in collaboration with DBT, attracting attention from international audiences, 600+ water utilities, regulators, engineering firms, technology giants and start-ups on February 20-21, 2024.

Seize this opportunity to share your expertise, forge new collaborations, and unlock development prospects.

Fill in this form with your case

studies: <http://tinyurl.com/UKWP-WaterResilience-Cases>

Meeting dates for 2024

Our first set of meeting were held on 9th January. The remaining UKWP Member meeting dates for 2024 are as follows:

1. Tues 14 May
2. Tues 3 Sept

The new format will be as follows (all the meetings in one day not two):

- 09:30 – 10:30 Board Meeting
- 11:00 – 12:30 Leadership Council
- 12:30 – 13:30 Lunch
- 13:30 – 15:30 Delivery Group

Message from Department for Business and Trade

Registrations are now open for the Department for Business and Trade's **International Market Day Workshop** on Monday 19th February, at Park Plaza London Riverbank. We will be welcoming trade and government officials from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Brazil and Egypt to share upcoming water sector opportunities in their markets, and how SMEs can capitalise on these opportunities.

The event will feature a keynote address from Kala Vairavamoorthy, Executive Director at the International Water Association, a presentation on export finance from UKEF, and a series of roundtables to ensure UK businesses are able to meet and network with our international delegations. Sign up using the following [link](#), or contact Water Sector Manager, Stephanie Martin via stephanie.martin@businessandtrade.gov.uk for more information.

We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

Workstream updates

The following sections give a brief update on the current UKWP workstreams. Detailed information on the workstreams is available on each of the dedicated pages on the UKWP website (click on the workstream in the table below to be taken there). If you would like more information, or would like to be involved, in any of the workstreams please contact the UKWP secretariat at info@theukwaterpartnership.org or any of the workstream leads:

Workstream	Sponsor	Workstream Leader(s) & Organisation	
Circular Economy	Tom Flood	Tom Flood	UKWP
Digital Water	Chris Newsome	Tony Conway	Conway Water Consulting
Greenhouse Gases	Chris Newsome	Andrew Tyler	University of Stirling & Hydro Nation Chair
		Amy Pickard	UKCEH
		Martin Shouler	Arup
		Ashleigh Fletcher	University of Strathclyde
Public Value of Water	Hans Jensen & Tom Flood	Jeremy Galpin & Helene Hewitt	Costain
Water Resilience	Hans Jensen	Martin Shouler	Arup
Water Resilient Places	Hans Jensen & Tom Flood	Deryck Irving	University of Stirling & Hydro Nation Chair
		Charlie Stratford	UKCEH

Here’s what’s been happening on each of the workstreams over the past six months:

Circular Economy

During 2023, the CE working group defined the requirements for a water sector circular economy marketplace. Work is ongoing a draft White Paper that articulates the rationale for, and opportunities related to, circular economy in the water sector including a call to action aimed at raising awareness of and garnering wider support for the development of the marketplace.

However, feedback received from a draft circulation in September 2023, along with a request for further case studies to demonstrate circular economy activity in the water sector space produced a limited response. This challenge has led to a discussion around the lack of understanding of the circular economy, and whether the White Paper may have more impact if it looks at developing people’s understanding so they can see the value to be derived from a circular economy.

Due to a lack of UK case studies, this could include describing what a circular economy looks like in the context of water, utilising case studies from other countries. The importance of the language used in the White Paper is also being thought about, for example thinking in terms of recycle or reuse rather than removal. These issues are being actively considered as we look to conclude and publish the paper later this year.

Workstream updates continued...

Greenhouse Gases

The next steps for this workstream are to bring together all the work currently being done in this into a thought leadership piece through the UKWP. This will bring together work and data from across the research space in the UK and developing recommendations from Europe.

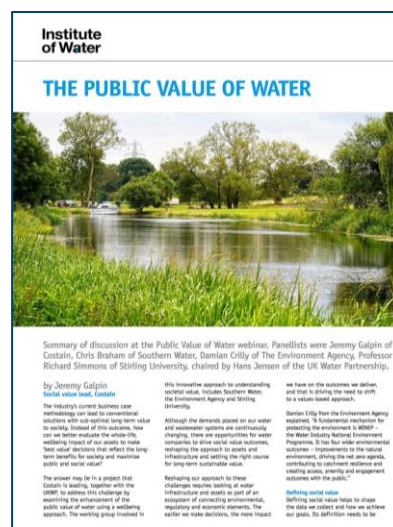
At the January meetings, UKWIR brought attention to the recently published report on this subject, and there is an intention to hold a joint workshop. The aim of this will be to establish what is already known and quantified, and therefore the focus can be on innovation, versus areas of uncertainty where work first needs to be done to better understand and quantify.

Public Value of Water

Since starting, the workstream has undertaken several activities. The workstream has met with Spring to look at a range of opportunities for research options for taking the work forward. At this point, it was decided that it was too early to submit an Ofwat Innovation fund bid. However, Prof. Richard Simmons from Sterling University identified an opportunity to apply for Innovate UK’s Accelerated Knowledge Transfer Fund with Southern Water as the business partner. This was submitted before Christmas and result is expected in January. Jeremy Galpin, one of the workstream leads, has been working with Southern Water specifically on CSOs and the wellbeing impact of putting sewage into rivers and seas. It was highlighted though that this will have wider benefits than just for Southern Water despite them being the business partner.

Additionally, consultation on the methodology was presented at a Nature Based Solutions event a survey was issued which received 70 responses. The responses confirmed the gap in current methodologies around this wellbeing issue. This work was then built on by issuing the survey wider and holding a best practice event based on the case study work for Southern Water. This formed the basis of an article that was published in the Institute of Water, which was a record of the best practice conversation. See article [here](#).

The next steps for the workstream are to secure innovation funding and identify additional best practice examples. Eventually, this will lead to a White Paper, which they are aiming to publish towards the end of the year to summarise the work.



Water Resilient Places

The Water Resilient Places workstream has had some challenges with availability due to personal circumstances over the last few months. However, the working group is still fully engaged meaning that activities can be kick started moving into the new year.

A consultation document on the challenge area will be finalised by the end of January. Additionally, the group have used the feedback from planners, urbanists, and engineering colleagues in Scotland to create an example which will then be taken UK wide. The aim is to have engagement finished Summer 2024 and a draft White Paper by Q3 in 2024.

Workstream updates continued...

Digital Water

The key program of work for the Digital Water Workstream is the Fourth Era Digital Observatory. The project is working towards creating a digital observatory of the Firth of Forth's entire water catchment, with a focus on climate adaptation and green recovery, with themes such as carbon sequestration, healthy waters, urban sponging, and energy recovery. This work is ongoing and the deadline to complete the first phase of this work is the end of 2024.

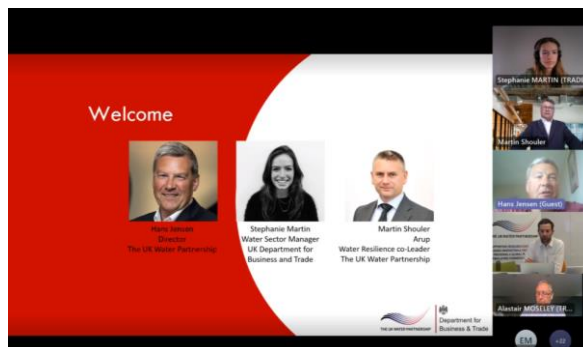
Current work is focussed on deploying sensors within the catchment to collect the data for the digital observatory. The biggest obstacle for this aspect of the project has been getting permission to deploy the sensors. Work has also been continuing on using satellite data to look at water quality and quantity and using SAR data to assess flooding and drought.

Further details on this project can be found on the UKWP website by clicking [here](#).

Water Resilience

Following the publication of our Water Resilience White Paper and Capability Capture last year, the Water Resilience working group have been working on an updated version featuring new exemplar case studies of UK expertise in water resilience. The next steps are to collect a good amount of new case studies to include this. The aim is to have these case studies by the end of Q4 2024 and a target date for the updated paper is early March. Additionally, the work will continue to be promoted at World Water Tech in February 2024 and the next DBT Showcase as well as continuing promotion through UKWP channels.

The key activity over the last year has been the Water Resilience Showcase in partnership with Department for Business and Trade. The event was a series of 14 drop-in sessions held by leading practitioners from the UK. This was shared with all UK embassies and aimed to promote UK capability in water resilience further. This has also produced video assets which are uploaded to the UKWP website for anyone to access. Additionally, the workstream has been seeking new case studies for an update of the Water Resilience White Paper. This has been promoted across Linked In, the UKWP website and through industry contacts.



Thought Piece: Steve Salvin & Mike Hull (Aiimi)

Steve Salvin from Aiimi gave a fascinating presentation on AI and Data in the water sector at the UK Water Industry Summit. In the afternoon, Steve co-lead a workshop with Mike Hull (also from Aiimi) on the same subject. The subject sparked great interest on the day and the pair have since been working on a White Paper on the subject. The following short thought-piece is a snippet of what is to come in that paper.



'AI Within Reach' Coming soon: January 2024

The UKWP, in partnership with the UK's leading AI-powered insights specialist, Aiimi, will launch a whitepaper for consultation later this month, focused on practical approaches to adoption of AI for industry leaders. The whitepaper, 'AI Within Reach', explores the potential for artificial intelligence (AI) to address some of the biggest challenges faced by the water industry.

As we near the beginning of AMP8, the water industry finds itself under enormous pressure to deliver hugely ambitious capital plans, respond to the impacts of climate change, and demonstrate its ongoing resilience – all at an affordable price for customers.

As a society, we find ourselves at the centre of a technology revolution. AI is transforming our personal and professional lives, enabling increased productivity across all industrial sectors, changing the way we learn, and recontextualising the vast array of data, information and knowledge that we have collectively created.

The forthcoming whitepaper seeks to reassure the water industry that AI is something we can now adopt and adapt to – leveraging 'quick-start' approaches to make rapid progress, while simultaneously preparing us for a future where AI and automation will power our business transformation.

Addressing the challenges, risks and opportunities of AI, 'AI Within Reach' is an optimistic view of the future of our industry – aiming to equip business leaders in our sector with the knowledge and insights they need to leverage AI.

For more information about the UK Water Partnership

www.theukwaterpartnership.org

Or contact us:

Tom Flood, Director – tomnflood@gmail.com

Hans Jensen, Director – hans.jensen@theukwaterpartnership.org

Chris Newsome, Director – newsomec@ic24.net

Secretariat – info@theukwaterpartnership.org



THE UK WATER PARTNERSHIP