

Water First

UK Water Partnership

Business Plan 2025/26



*Improving the **coordination and collaboration** across the water sector*



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



*Connecting the **public and private sectors** to work better together*



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

The UK Water Partnership

- ❖ Was established in 2015 to provide a **strategic vision for the development and growth** of the UK water industry.
- ❖ Brings together diverse water industry and related organisations in a **single coherent alliance**, promoting mutual understanding, cooperation and coordination.
- ❖ Supports the development of sustainable solutions and ensures that the UK's experts, innovators and entrepreneurs are at the forefront of the global response.

Contents

Who we are

Our Vision and Purpose

Our Approach

Our Value

Value to the Sector

Value to Members

How we operate

Our Structure

Our Ethos

Our Board

Our Members and Partners

Endorsement

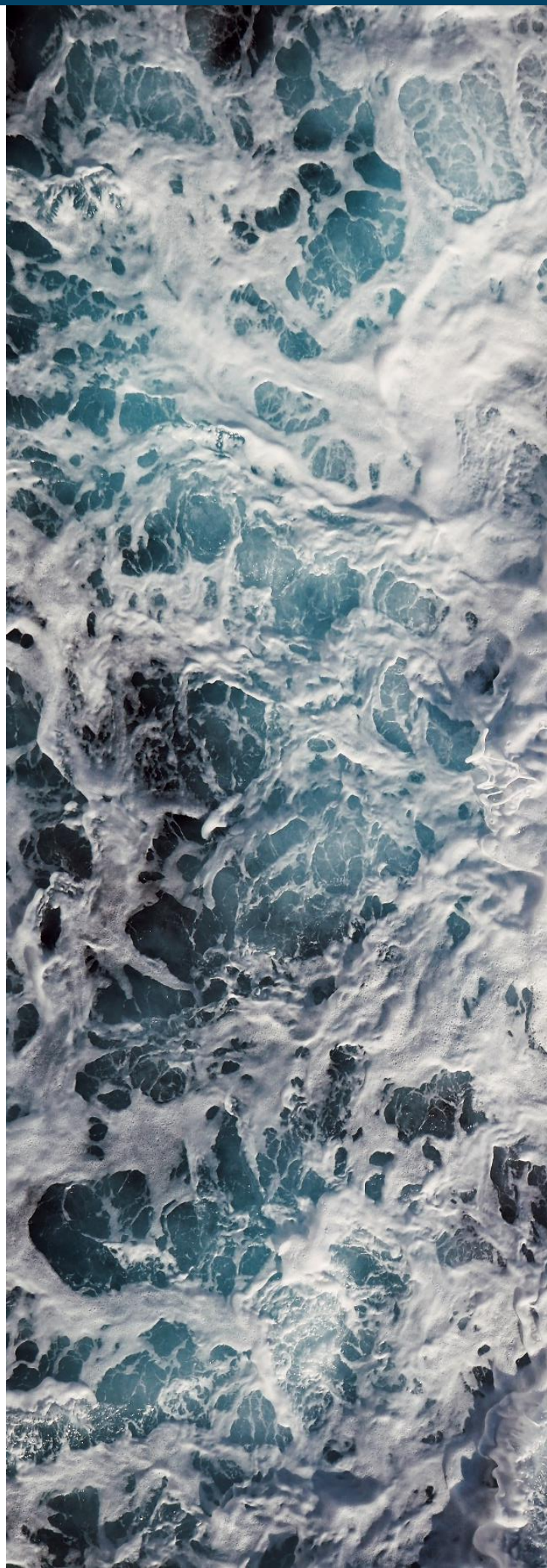
Business Plan 2025/26

The Circular Economy Taskforce

The UK Water Industry Summit

Our Business Objectives for 2025/26

Our Workstreams and Planned Work for
2025/26



Section 1

Who We Are



THE UK WATER PARTNERSHIP

Our Vision And Purpose

1. To ensure that the UK's experts, innovators, academics and utilities are at the forefront of the response to global water challenges by building sustainable and resilient global expertise networks, sharing knowledge and resources.
2. To advance UK capability by effectively supporting delivery and implementation of research and innovation.
3. To improve understanding, cooperation and coordination across the diverse range of stakeholders in the water community by facilitating collaboration across the public and private sectors.
4. To catalyse the growth of the water economy both in the UK and internationally by showcasing UK capability and connecting organisations and opportunities.

Our Approach



1. Improving the coordination and collaboration within the water sector

By pooling knowledge and resources we address global water challenges and promote the connectivity across the sector.

We bring together a diverse range of organisations from across the sector.

This aids the industry to work collaboratively towards a common goal with a collective voice that spans UK Wide and has, up to now, been absent.



2. Supporting research excellence and promoting collaborative innovation

We develop and give a platform to thought leadership.

We promote and support innovation and research within the sector.

This accelerates the advancement of capability, knowledge, and innovation in the sector.



3. Connecting the public and private sectors to work better together

We enable a close and permanent dialogue between public and private sectors.

We facilitate industry wide discussions and collaboration to share knowledge and expertise.

This provides a unique link across the sector to improve efficiency and efficacy of work.



4. Tapping into the \$500 billion global water market

We showcase UK capability to international market through events and platforms.

We support UK organisations working to tackle global water challenges and open opportunities for work and funding.

This drives commercial growth in the sector by highlighting gaps in the industry and giving visibility to initiatives happening across the UK.



Our Value

Value to the Sector

Our company's value proposition can help the water sector in several ways:

❖ **Facilitating the advancement of UK research and innovation:**

By increasing the capacity and capabilities in water related activity, we can contribute to tackling the challenges that the water sector is facing. This can help the UK to be seen at the forefront of sector to grow and access new markets.

❖ **Working together with the public sector:** We believe that working together with the public sector is key to achieving our goals. We provide an organised communication channel between the private and public sector, which helps us to connect key actors across the water community. This collaboration results in an effective response of action within the sector. An example of this work is our spot on the UK Government's Circular Economy Taskforce where we help create evidence-driven strategies and sector-specific roadmaps addressing resource circularity.

❖ **Focusing resources by providing a common voice of the strategic priorities within the sector:** By providing a common voice of the strategic priorities within the sector, we focus resources, accelerate capability advancements, and help grow the sector.

❖ **Access to national and international opportunities:** Our platform provides access to national and international opportunities, which can help the sector grow and access new markets.

❖ **Producing thought leadership pieces and white papers:** We produce these to provide water professionals with a tool to raise awareness for critical gaps within the sector. This can help to raise awareness for critical gaps within the sector and contribute to tackling those challenges.



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△ The UKWP joins the Circular Economy Taskforce



△ The 2025 Annual Summit on River Health and Restoring Trust



Our Value

Value to Members

The UK Water Partnership membership consists of a broad and diverse range of organisations including [academia](#), [private sector companies](#), [research institutes](#), and [public bodies](#). This provides the UKWP members with a unique position to influence and better coordinate the work being done across the sector.

The UKWP's way of working, and its unique role within the water sector, means that being a member of the UK Water Partnership provides several invaluable benefits. The key benefits are [exposure](#), [influence and improved collaboration across the sector](#) as well as [a unique line of communication between the public, private, and academic sectors](#).

In 2024, with the support of our members, we developed a Value Statement for the partnership. An extract is provided below, and the full document is available on our website: [UKWP Value Statement - The UK Water Partnership](#).

Value the Different Membership Organisations

- **Academia:** Gain diverse perspectives within the water sector to better understand water cycle challenges of water cycle challenges, collaborate with industry, and influence policy through shared insights and unique projects.
- **Private Companies:** Leverage expertise, diverse perspectives, and innovation to inform business decisions, create industry knowledge assets such as thought leadership pieces, and enhance brand awareness.
- **Research Institutes:** Benefit from an impartial space to share ideas and discuss strategy, access diverse expertise and innovation, connect with members across the water cycle and sectors, tap into real project experience, and gain UK-wide member insights.
- **Water Companies:** Discover and influence emerging sector research early, access a variety of experts and projects, benefit from an impartial not-for-profit space, connect with members across the UK and sectors, and tap into thought leadership.

A Few Words from our Members

“In a world where the need for sustainable solutions is more pressing than ever, the UK Water Partnership's dedication to fostering innovation, knowledge exchange, and cross sectoral cooperation is truly commendable. Aiimi proudly stands with the Partnership in its mission to safeguard water resources for current and future generations, and we look forward to contributing our expertise and capabilities towards this shared goal.” – **Steve Salvin, CEO, Aiimi**

“The UKWP provides a critical connection across the water sector to seek out, stimulate and champion best practice, whilst advocating the role water plays in our lives, economy and the just transition to net zero society.” – **Prof. Andrew Tyler, Scotland Hydronation Chair**

Value to Members



Workstreams

Workstreams are the foundation for the work that UKWP does. Involvement in a workstream provides the opportunity to shape the advancement of work within a specific sector and often results in co-authorship of a white paper.



Collective voice

Being a member of the UKWP and working together with other organisations from across the industry outwardly shows you as a forward-thinking player in the sector.



Yearly meetings

The UKWP hosts three yearly meetings where members can network with others, share their knowledge and expertise, and discuss the latest developments in the water sector.



Events

The UKWP organises, and is involved with, events throughout the year such as the UK Water Industry Summit, World Water Tech and a UK Water Resilience Showcase. Members are given the opportunity to attend these events and often have the opportunity to present their work and thought leadership to a varied audience.



Work and funding opportunities

The UKWP meetings and network provide a platform to connect with other organisations across the UK who are working in a similar area. This can open new opportunities for work and funding.



Direct links to influential public bodies

Through UKWP channels, members can directly communicate with the specific people who influence water related activities within government and other public bodies such as Defra and DBT.



UK and International visibility

Being a member of the UKWP, attending meetings and events and participating in workstreams will enhance the visibility of your work to the UK and International markets.



Publicise your events

Members can publicise their events through UKWP channels to reach a wider audience.



Improve your network

Meet people from other areas of the sector who are working on similar subjects at our monthly meetings, events, or just through contacts within the UKWP network.



Section 2

How We Operate



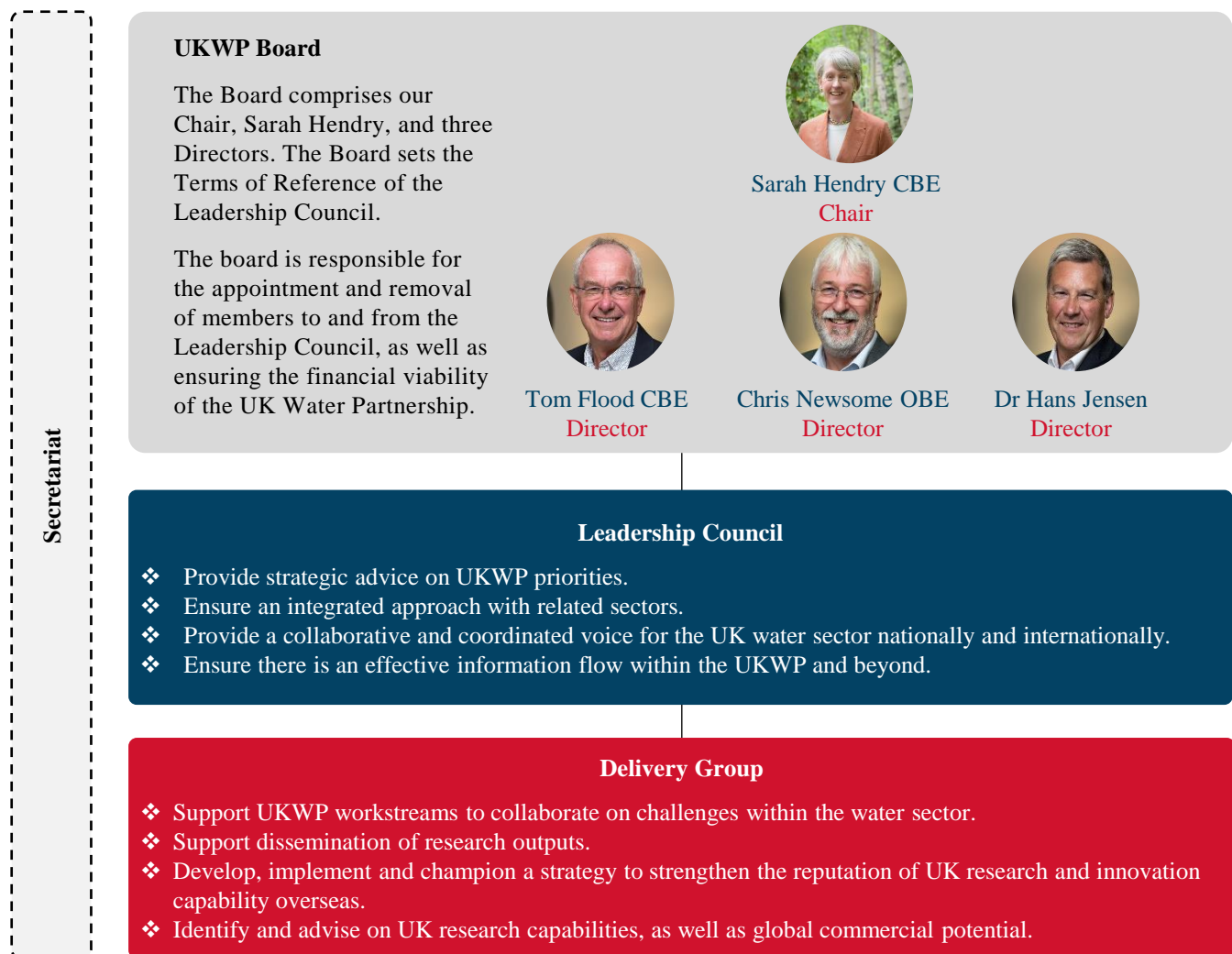
THE UK WATER PARTNERSHIP

Our Structure and How We Operate

The organogram below shows how the partnership is structured and describes the respective roles and responsibilities of the Chair and Board of Directors, Leadership Council, and supporting Delivery Group.

The Leadership Council and Delivery Group meets not less than three times a year.

A secretariat, provided by Arup, has provided support to the UKWP since its inception in 2015, and operates the bank account for the partnership under arrangements covered by a written protocol from the Board.



Our Ethos

We value diversity in our organisation, seeking a variety of backgrounds and sector expertise to enrich discussions and initiatives. Our goal is to promote positive water consumption behaviour and raise awareness of the value of water nationally and internationally. Committed to excellence, we uphold high standards in our work for the UKWP and its members, ensuring outstanding service and value.

Our Board



Sarah Hendry CBE

Chair

Sarah Hendry was the Director General of the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) since 2018. She has now joined Wessex Water as an independent non-executive director. After studying Modern Languages at Oxford University, she was a civil servant for nearly 30 years, working mostly within Defra but also in the Cabinet Office and Department of Health. She was a Director for 12 years, covering a wide range of policy areas including rural development, Common Agricultural Policy reform, animal health and welfare, farming, forestry, climate change, global and public health. From 2015 – 18, Sarah was the Defra director for Floods and Water policy and a member of the UKWP Leadership Council.



Chris Newsome OBE

Director

Chris is a Civil Engineer and has over 40 years of experience in managing large asset bases and infrastructure. He is recognised for his leadership in collaboration and innovation across the supply chain leading to significant reductions in both cost and carbon. Chris has many years' main board executive experience. He has a diverse non-executive and advisory portfolio.



Dr Hans Jensen

Director

Hans Jensen is a graduate of Imperial College and the University of Oxford and began his career as a geophysicist working on earthquake research and geothermal energy. He spent the majority of his career with RWE working on power stations, international project development and serving as Head of Environmental Management and R&D & Innovation. He was CEO of UKWIR for seven years, leading water industry research, before taking up his role of UKWP Director. Hans is a Visiting Professor at UWE in Bristol and works as a power plant and energy consultant.



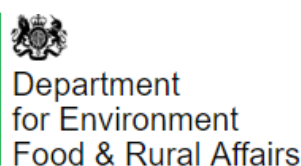
Tom Flood CBE

Director

Tom's childhood in Southern Ireland gave him a lifelong appreciation of the health benefits from access to green spaces and being part of a local community. His career started with 3M in sales and marketing. He was CEO of the Conservation Volunteers and in 2004 was awarded a CBE for services to conservation. He helped establish the UKWP with Defra and is currently Thames Warden and subject to Election will be the Master in July 26 for the Water Conservators Livery Company. He divides his time between London and Dorset where he is Chair of the Dorset Community Foundation, founder of the Paul Cornes Fund and junior President Poole Rotary.

Our Members and Partners

The UKWP is a public-private not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with its operations funded by financial contributions from its members. Private sector contributions are used to carry out core operational activities such as administration, marketing and promotion, as well as planning and hosting events that help promote the UK water economy both at home and overseas. The Partnership is indebted to its members, not just for their continued financial support, but also for their substantial gifts of time and for their willingness to co-design our emerging products and services.



Endorsement

“Through involvement in UKWP we have gained greater access to organisations and people in the water sector, bringing in diversity of thinking to support and promote the development of our work assessing the public value of water. Through association with UKWP and its members, our work on public value of water attracts credibility, which in turn facilitates further opportunities to develop the work.”

Gavin Stonard
Business Development Director, Costain

“The extensive network provided by members of the UK Water Partnership supports our aim to work with global practitioners across the water sector. This ensures our science addresses the most pressing issues and that the full benefits of our research are realised.”

Prof Alan Jenkins,
UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology

“The UK Water Partnership brings together senior leaders and subject matter experts in the water sector and beyond. As a member, UKWIR benefits from the opportunity to work collaboratively with other organisations, helping to create innovative solutions to meet the complex challenges facing the water sector today and in the future.”

Steve Kaye,
Ex-Chief Executive, UKWIR

“UKWP have been key to developing our project around ‘The public value of water’ providing the forum to develop and connect with key partners, supporting our working group and helping to promote the activity and create new connections to develop the work further. Consequently, we are now developing the project into best practice guidance for the industry as a whole and building the necessary collaboration to secure innovation funding which will enable deeper research, impact and longevity to the project.”

Jeremy Galpin
Lead Consultant, Costain



THE UK WATER PARTNERSHIP

Section 3

Business Plan 2025/26



THE UK WATER PARTNERSHIP

The Circular Economy Taskforce

The UK Water Partnership has been participating in the UK Government's Circular Economy Taskforce.

UKWP Directors Chris Newsome and Hans Jensen were both appointed as members of the Taskforce, which started its work toward the end of 2024.

The Taskforce has been charged with helping co-design a strategy to begin the transition to a circular economy in England. The strategy will play a key part in supporting economic growth, creating green jobs, promoting efficient and productive use of resources, and accelerate the transition to net zero emissions. The UK Water Partnership will thereby ensure that the water sector is represented and contributes to the government's mission to kickstart economic growth and make Britain a clean energy superpower, in particular supporting delivery of the UK government's Industrial Strategy and refreshed Carbon Budget Delivery Plan.

The Circular Economy Strategy for England will focus in particular on how we use our resources in the best way and to the best possible effect, deriving from them the maximum possible value before they become waste while also reducing emissions. Using our resources in this way will require major changes in behaviour and capability across the UK, generating opportunities to invest in capital, technology, and jobs – and to align that investment completely with our environmental objectives.

In his speech at the Dock Shed in London, **Steve Reed, the Environment Secretary**, provided a some more context regarding the creation of the taskforce:

“I want to support [Circular Economy] businesses to succeed. By facilitating the transition, [the people] told me this sector wants to make. That's why I set up the Circular Economy taskforce, bringing together experts from government, industry, academia and civil society to work with businesses on what they want to see so we create the best possible conditions for investment. I'm delighted to have so many members of the taskforce here with us in the room this morning. Under the leadership of Andrew Morlet and Professor Paul Ekins, the taskforce will work with businesses to develop the first ever Circular Economy Strategy for England. We will publish the Strategy in the coming Autumn. It will include the long-term regulatory roadmaps that businesses asked for, showing the journey to circularity, sector by sector, so you have the certainty and direction to invest in the future. We will start with five sectors that have the greatest potential to grow the economy: chemicals and plastics; construction; textiles; transport; and agrifood.”

The UK Water Industry Summit

The UK Water Industry Summit, which took place in October 2023, was a pivotal moment in looking forward to the strategic focus of the UKWP. The summit invited speakers from a range of perspectives to raise the challenges that they feel are most critical to the water sector. The follow-up from this Summit will be taking place on April 23rd, 2025, focusing on River Health and Restoring Trust.

The UKWP co-hosted the event with partners British Water, UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR), Future Water, the Water Industry Forum and Spring. The visible collaboration of six of the UK water industry's leading membership organisations signified a new era of collaboration to tackle the complex challenges raised – and to take advantage of the opportunities that these challenges present.

Outcomes

The UK Water Industry Summit defined five areas that collaborative working among the six partners, and the members of each of the organisation, could help address more effectively.

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

Commitments

The six partners made the following commitments by signing a Statement of Intent at the UK Water Industry Summit:

- 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.

The UKWP Business Plan integrated these commitments and collaborative initiatives into its objectives for 2024/25 and will continue to do so in 2025/26. This strategic approach aims to realise the vision of a collaborative ecosystem, as envisioned by the UK Water Industry Summit, serving as a catalyst for progress in the water sector.



THE UK WATER PARTNERSHIP



Collaborating for the UK Water Sector

Statement of Intent

The water sector of the UK is facing a range of challenges from the impacts of climate change, environmental concerns to regulatory and infrastructure issues. These challenges require better coordination across the whole of the water value chain to address issues such as the response to climate change, ageing infrastructure, water quality, pollution, customer expectation and population growth as well as the need to attract and retain talent.

Although, the sector is well served by a number of industry associations which serve the whole of the water value chain, the organisations below consider that they can be more effective through increased collaboration in order to best delineate the solutions to issues that face the sector and to agree and deliver what is required.

Areas of collaboration include:

- Thought Leadership;
- Research;
- Development;
- Innovation;
- Application.

Collaboration will take the form of the following:

1. Sharing of work programmes in order to explore areas of mutual interest.
2. Coordination on 'One Voice' statements in areas of common interest.
3. Participation in an annual joint 'water collaboration summit' to share knowledge and experience and to agree and deliver programs of work.
4. Explore opportunities to promote UK water expertise internationally.
5. Connecting resources and sharing knowledge to review, update and build upon the UK 2050 Water Innovation Strategy to ensure it remains current and valid.

This collaboration will help the UK water sector deliver a reliable supply of safe, clean water while protecting the environment and adapting to changing conditions.

Signed,

Sarah Hendry, The UK Water Partnership

Mark Fletcher, British Water

Steve Kaye, UK Water Industry Research

Anita Payne, Water Industry Forum

Paul Horton, Future Water Association

Carly Perry, Spring



Business objectives for 2025/26

Our business objectives are the high-level priorities for ensuring the UKWP continues to be a thriving, influential membership body that serves members' interests effectively.

❖ Maximise our impact on the water sector

In 2025/26 the UKWP aims to fortify governmental engagement and facilitate networking and discussion platforms to enhance communication among key stakeholders in the industry. These initiatives are designed to direct investments strategically, ultimately achieving a substantial and measurable impact on the water sector.

❖ Be at the forefront of thought-leadership for water in the UK

The UKWP aims to maintain its position as one of the leading supporters of research and innovation within the water sector through our workstreams by developing thought leadership papers and supporting research initiatives including highlighting funding opportunities to members accelerating the advancement of capability, knowledge, and innovation in the sector.

❖ Honour the commitment made at the UK Water Industry Summit

The UKWP aims to foster a collaborative ecosystem within the UK water sector by honouring the commitments made at the UK Water Industry Summit. Through strategic alliances and joint initiatives, the objective is to drive innovation, enhance thought leadership, and develop collaborative solutions to the key challenge areas highlighted during the Summit.

❖ Grow and diversify the membership

To expand and diversify the membership of the UK Water Partnership (UKWP) in 2025/26 the primary focus will be on the retention, recruitment, and representation of members.

❖ Provide members with exceptional value through their membership.

Building on the 2023/24 and 2024/25 successes, including the Water Summit, and joining the Circular Economy Taskforce the UKWP is intensifying its commitment to delivering tangible benefits in 2025/26. This includes providing its members with a greater influence, increased exposure, expanded networking opportunities, and collaboration.

Business enablers for 2025/26

How will we achieve our Business Objectives over the next year?

Our business enablers are the crucial activities which will allow us to deliver on our business objectives.

- **Engagement Opportunities:** Implementing targeted engagement initiatives to involve members actively, by promoting involvement in workstreams, organising regular events, providing platforms to engage with government, which will foster networking and knowledge sharing among members.
- **Skill and Knowledge Development:** Allowing members to showcase their expertise, enhancing their profile within the sector by providing a platform for them to present or host workshop, increasing their visibility and networking opportunities.
- **Global Collaboration:** Establishing and maintaining connections with international organisations and professionals to bring in diverse perspectives and global best practices by participating in global conferences and events to expand the partnership's visibility on an international scale.
- **Technological Innovation:** Working with our members and partners to identify and communicate the gaps within the water sector to drive research into these topics. This will foster and promote innovation in water technologies and solutions as well as attract tech-oriented companies and startups who will contribute to the partnership's diversity.
- **Advocacy and Thought Leadership:** Maintaining the position of the partnership as a thought leader in the water sector by actively participating in policy discussions and advocating for positive change. This will also provide an opportunity for joint working between members, through development of white papers, co-development of workstreams and events, improving the collaboration within the partnership.
- **Youth Involvement:** Promoting events and opportunities that involve younger water professionals to also provide them with an opportunity to have a voice and share ideas for the future of water. Attending events to improve the visibility of the partnership amongst young professionals.



△ Regular member meetings and networking sessions



△ Opportunities to lead workstreams and engage with the UKWP annual events



△ Supporting innovation and research such as the Fourth Era Programme



△ Collaborative development of white papers through workstreams such as the Circular Water Economy White Paper

Our Workstreams and Planned Work for 2025/26

Since 2015, the UKWP has been working alongside clients, collaborators, and government to drive strategic sector initiatives. The workstreams of the UKWP aim to drive innovation, enhance thought leadership, and develop solutions in specific challenge areas that are chosen by our members.

All Workstreams and Their Leads

Circular Economy and Net Zero – AtkinsRéalis, University of Bath, Veolia

Data and AI - Aiimi

Digital Water – University of Stirling

Future Talent and Skills – Future Water Association and the Water Industry Forum

Greenhouse Gases – University of Strathclyde

River Health and Restoring Trust– Adrian Rees Consulting, Aecom

Water Resilience – Arup, HR Wallingford

Water Resilient Places – University of Stirling

Our Prioritised Workstreams

The below workstreams have been selected as the coming year's prioritised focus as they align with the industry trends and the interest of our member organisations.

Water Resilience

Supported by Arup, HR Wallingford, and other contributors, the UKWP published a Water Resilience White Paper in February 2022, examining water resilience's impact on the industry and economy. The goal for 2025/26 is to continue updating the case studies to reflect the latest work in this field and to highlight the UK's expertise internationally



Our Prioritised Workstreams

Circular Economy

In October 2024, with support from the University of Bath and WSP, the UKWP published a Circular Water Economy white paper. The paper outlined the rationale and opportunities for adopting circular economy principles within the water sector, and included a call to action to raise awareness and build support for the development of a circular water marketplace.

Building on this foundation, the UKWP - together with AtkinsRéalis, the University of Bath, and Veolia—is now progressing Phase 2 of the Circular Economy initiative. Additionally, in 2025, the UKWP joined the UK Government’s Circular Economy Taskforce and will continue contributing to its work throughout 2026.

Data and AI

At the UKWP Annual Summit in 2023, Steve Salvin, Aiimi’s CEO, gave a presentation on the topic of Data and AI and the role it could play in the water industry. This year, the UKWP has published a White Paper explore how generative AI in particular can help us respond to our greatest challenges and create a legacy of knowledge and expertise that’s accessible, valuable, and helpful for future generations.

River Health and Restoring Trust

The UK water industry is being held to account for its impact on the natural water environment. Investment is needed to upgrade and replace assets typically associated with the wastewater cycle. However, there are concerns that simply investing in these assets will not produce the result required. This year, the UKWP along with Adrian Rees Consulting, Aecom and a committee of Young Water Professionals have organised a summit which aims to shape a collective statement of ambition and actionable outcomes for river water quality, defining what ‘good’ looks like, envisioning improved public value of water and blue-green spaces in 25 years, while rebuilding trust through open dialogue and collaborative solutions. The next step for this workstream is writing the white paper collating the thoughts from the summit.

Future Talent and Skills

The UK Water Partnership recognises the vital importance of nurturing and involving young talent in shaping the future of the water sector. Young professionals bring fresh perspectives, energy, and innovative thinking, qualities that are essential for challenging outdated practices and driving meaningful progress. At the 2023 Annual Summit, the co-conveners (Future Water Association, Spring, British Water, Water Industry Forum, and UKWIR) committed to making the engagement of young professionals a priority. In response, the Partnership has taken active steps to empower the next generation of leaders.

For the 2025 Summit, a dedicated committee of Young Water Professionals has taken the lead in organising the event. They are not only shaping the structure of the day but also curating the key discussions. This initiative marks a significant step toward embedding future talent and skills into the core of the water industry’s strategic planning and showcases the UKWP’s commitment to long-term, sustainable leadership.

For more information about the UK Water Partnership

www.theukwaterpartnership.org

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