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Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly

Responsibilities

Within England we're responsible for:

- regulating major industry and waste
- treatment of contaminated land
- water quality and resources
- fisheries
- inland river, estuary and harbour navigations
- conservation and ecology

We are also responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea.

Priorities

Our priorities are to:

- work with businesses and other organisations to manage the use of resources
- increase the resilience of people, property and businesses to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion
- protect and improving water, land and biodiversity
- improve the way we work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth

Read more about [Environment Agency: EA2025 creating a better place](#)



EA 2025

A NATION RESILIENT
TO CLIMATE CHANGE



EA 2025

HEALTHY AIR,
LAND AND WATER



EA 2025

GREEN GROWTH AND
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

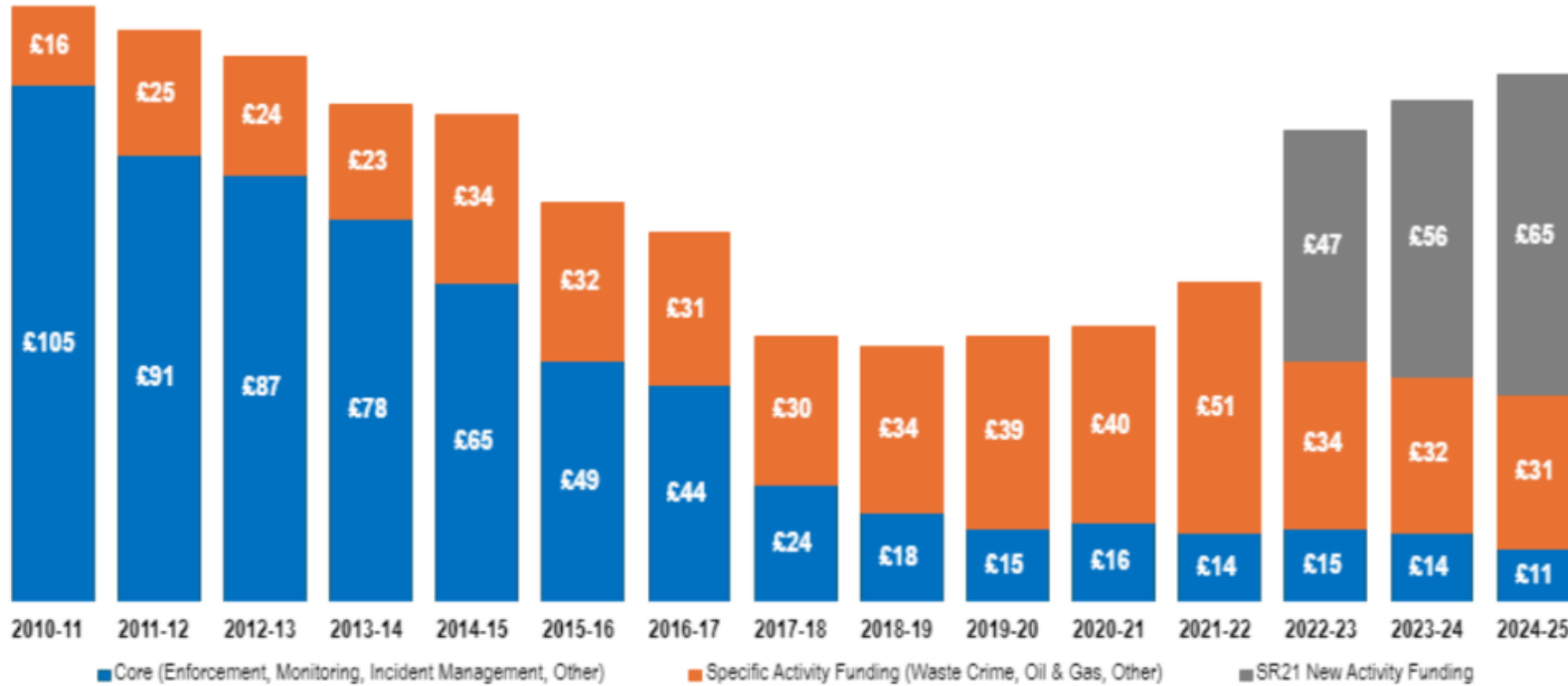


Our duties

Under section 2 of WIA91 as amended, we must carry out most of our work as an economic regulator in the way we consider will best:

- further the consumer objective to protect the interests of consumers, wherever appropriate by promoting effective competition
- secure that water companies (meaning water and sewerage undertakers) properly carry out their statutory functions
- secure that water companies can (in particular through securing reasonable returns on their capital) finance the proper carrying out of their statutory functions
- secure that water supply licensees and sewerage licensees properly carry out their licensed activities and statutory functions
- further the resilience objective to secure the long-term resilience of water companies' water supply and wastewater systems; and to secure that they take steps to enable them, in the long term, to meet the need for water supplies and wastewater services

GiA Resource Funding



Additional funding from SR21 (£65m)

- Project Speed
- Contaminated Land
- Air Quality
- Water Quality
- Navigation
- Environmental Monitoring
- Nature For Climate & Biodiversity
- Water Transformation
- Future Farming
- Chemical Regulation
- Waste Reform
- Marine

Examples of specific activity funding (£31m)

- Air Quality Monitoring
- Abstraction Reform
- Environment Bill
- Waste Crime

Examples of non specific funding (£12m)

- Enforcement
- Monitoring
- IT & Data
- Whole Life Costs

Assessing Compliance



In Devon and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, for 2025/2026 the Water Industry teams will deliver

- Over 800 inspections to South West Water Assets (10,000 nationally)
- measures to address concerns about flow and storm overflows
- increased enforcement action for pollution incidents.

The Water (Special Measures) Bill will:

- speed up our enforcement response
- us to focus our prosecution activities
- Strengthen penalties for obstruction offences
- enable the courts to include imprisonment
- give water companies a duty to publish data within an hour of a discharge for all emergency overflows in England.
- new statutory requirements for water companies to publish annual Pollution Incident Reduction Plans

Reporting to the Public



- The Environment Agency's online tool [Swimfo](#) provides information on all our designated bathing waters
- The Environment Agency works with local authorities to enable decisions on posting signs at these swimming locations to inform bathers about any possible dips in water quality.
- The Environment Agency does not warn and inform the public when **permitted** spills are happening. However, the local water company, SWW, does.
- You can find out more at: [Event duration monitoring – lifting the lid on storm overflows - Creating a better place \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

What action is being taken?

Action Plan: Goodrington (Deterioration)

 Environment Agency

Location		Torbay, Devon					Bathing water number			24200		
Usage		Popular					Controller			Torbay Council		
Type of Bathing Water		Coastal					Designate in			1988		
Local contact- Water Quality:		Gabrielle Garland					Champion			A&R Devon		
Local contact- comms:		Sophia Ashby					Area Environment Manager			Bruce Newport		
Expected Result in 2024		Sufficient					Area			DCIS		
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Classification and % risk of failure	Sufficient (0%)	Good (0%)	Good (0%)	Good (0%)	Sufficient (0%)	Sufficient (6.2%)	Sufficient (32%)	Un-classified	Good (46%)	Good (0%)	Sufficient (0%)	

Bathing Water History & Characteristics
Bathing water profile Bathing water profile (data.gov.uk)
Sampling Programme BW statutory sample: Goodrington Beach (24200) Investigational sample: Goodrington Stream At Beach Investigational sample: Goodrington Stream Car Park
Local context The Environment Agency (EA) engage with the Torbay Council and South West Water (SWW) closely and liaise around water quality issues that could affect the bathing water.

[Bathing water profile](#)

- Bathing waters are having ongoing investigations if at sufficient or good.
- Goodrington- bathing water impacted by diffuse urban pollution, misconnections, dog faeces.
- Agriculture not thought to be of major impact
- Rapid bacteria sampling undertaken
- Ragging infrastructure to prevent blocking (WINEP)
- SWW has done investigations
- No connectivity to nearby holiday park
- EA monitoring
- Event Duration Monitoring: Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) data provides a robust and consistent way of monitoring how often and for how long storm overflows are used. This monitoring underpins our planning, compliance and enforcement work.

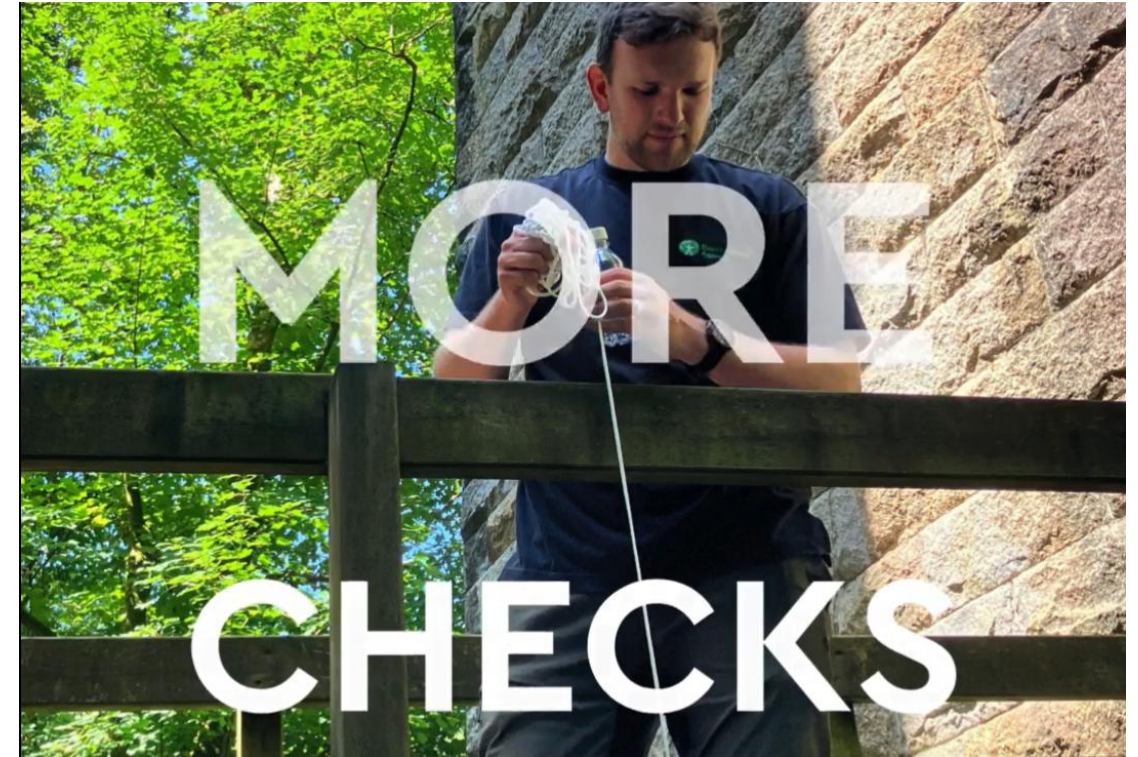
The most recent classification is **Good**, based on samples taken from 2021 through to 2024.



Good bathing water quality
★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★
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Dry day spills- are they compliant with their permit?

- Dry day spill data is collected centrally and made available to the local area team.
- A dry day spill is when a storm overflow is used on a 'dry day' defined as no rainfall above 0.25mm on that day and the preceding 24 hours.
- South West Water do have many sites that cause dry day spills.
- There can be legitimate reasons for a longer drain down time for instance rainfall catchment size and tidal influences
- SWW must submit evidence to do with surface water inflows and a suitable action plan demonstrating root cause of the issue and outlining how they intend to resolve it.
- SWW need to submit these plans to us next year.



Are all the spills illegal?



- Event Duration Monitors increase transparency by measuring how, when and for how long a storm overflow is in operation.
- 100% of storm overflows across the water network in England have now been fitted with Event Duration Monitors (EDMs).
- This shows the public when discharges are happening, and helps the government and regulators to better hold water companies to account for illegal sewage spills and improve knowledge of overflow operation to identify where improvements can be made.
- Storm overflows are an automatic safety valve that release excess pressure on the network from flooding and rain – preventing sewage backing up into properties and stopping widespread mains pipe bursts across the country.
- They should, however, only be used under strict permit conditions.**

What is the Environment Agency doing about dry day spills?

- We need to gather the data from the water company monitors and assess thousands of lines of data.
- Further investigation is always required on 'dry day spills'. We need to have a certain level of evidence to take enforcement action
- Includes site inspection and a requirement for the company to provide detailed evidence on the spill in question
- SSW have reported **2,323 dry day spills** between 1st January and 30th June 2025
- It is not possible for the Environment Agency to investigate each one.
- We take a national approach and focus on those assets which spill very frequently or have the potential to impact on sensitive sites such as bathing or shellfish waters.

[Storm Overflow Reduction Plan by Constituency including 2023-4 spill data.xlsx](#)



What is the Environment Agency doing about dry day spills?

We have 24 offences coming to court this month with more to follow in 2026.

These investigations are for events that have caused environmental harm.

We act proportionately when we apply the law and take account of and balance the:

- risk posed to people and the environment
- seriousness of the breach of the law
- impact on the environment, people and legitimate business
- cost of taking enforcement action against the benefit of taking it
- impact on economic growth
- Like all public bodies, we operate with finite resources and we need to prioritise our work. That means we will focus our investigation on those sites that are the biggest risk to our environment.



Enforcement & Compliance

Devon dairy farm prosecuted for 'chronic and continuing' pollution

A dairy farm in north Devon has been prosecuted after it was found to have caused pollution in a nearby stream, with ammonia levels almost 100 times higher than healthy levels

by Conor McGlone



Press release

North Devon company fined for pollution that devastated fish population

The North Devon company that caused a pollution incident leading to a devastating fish kill on the River Mole near South Molton has been fined £2,000 and ordered to pay £9,836 in costs.

Smart Biosphere – Applications & Customers

Application Modules	Realtime monitoring	Forecasting predictive analysis	Geographic track & trace	Scenario modelling	Intervention baseline & monitor
Coilform	✓	✓			✓
Water nutrient load	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eutrophication	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Water pollutants	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Water volume/flow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Soil chemistry	✓	✓	✓		
Bathing quality	✓	✓			

Customers

Water Companies	Environment Agency	Delta	Farmers & Landowners	Rivers Trusts	LNPs	Natural Capital Investors	Supermarkets & supply chain	The public
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Legal News

EA announces its



Two-th
Devon

Nearly nine in
regulations, a

South West Water fails in attempt to get sewage dumping charges dropped



The River Torridge near Great Torrington. The report said that many dairy farms had increased their herds, but not their slurry storage. Photograph: John Insull/Alamy



South West Water pleaded guilty to 13 charges of unauthorised sewage releases and breaches of environmental permits

South West Water has been fined a record amount of more than £2.1m after admitting causing pollution in Devon and Cornwall.

Misconnection campaign in Torrington



REGULATION: Water Resources



In Devon and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, for 2025/2026 the Land & Water teams have a target to deliver

- 283 inspections of abstraction and impounding licences.
- This includes 32 inspections of water company licences.
- This will result in increased enforcement action for non-compliances.

Restoring Sustainable Abstraction (RSA) programme:

- DCIS have 12 sites in the RSA programme which is a high priority for the area.
- These licences will have to become sustainable by variation or revocation by the end of 2026 to allow for appeals to be processed by the end of 2027. A compensation fund is available.
- Of the 12 licences, 8 are for fish farms and the other 4 are for HEP generation.

What else does the Environment Agency do beyond regulation?



Monitor what is happening in our rivers and bathing waters.

We carry out around 90,000 water quality sampling visits a year from 13,000 different locations and use the results to target polluters. In North Devon we have the Biosphere partnership with monitoring provision.

Prevent our rivers from drying out: the EA licenses water abstraction and we work with all the main abstractors, water companies, farmers, energy producers and industry - to get it to a sustainable level.

Improve water habitats: we plant trees and plants that support wildlife, remove barriers to fish and eel passage, restock rivers with fish, remove invasive species, and restore rivers and streams to their natural state.

Work with farmers to secure better compliance with the rules and tackle inadequate farm infrastructure and poor soil and nutrient management.

What else is the Environment Agency doing??

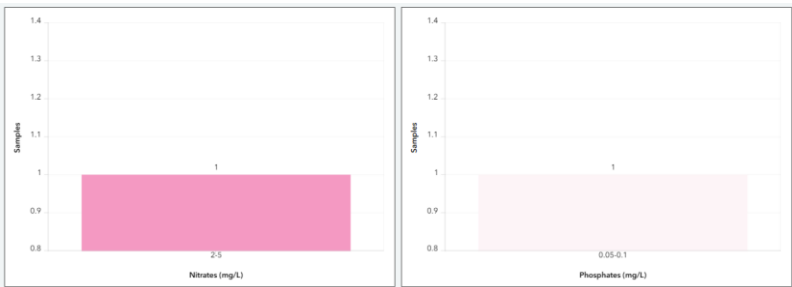
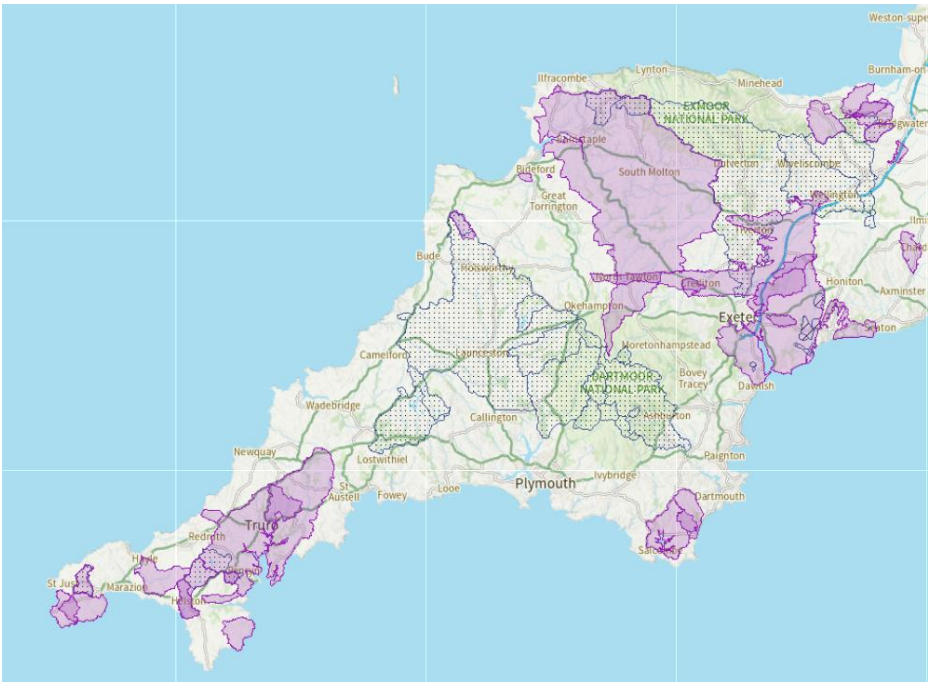


- Catchment co-ordinator Dave Shorten involved in partnership working re water quality and more.
- Increased development, discussions with Local authority and SWW on asset improvement via the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP)
- Liaising with forums: The Torbay climate partnership the EA fed into the **Greener Way For Our Bay Framework and Action Plan**
- Flood pipeline project- active partner
- Seagrass and ecology surveys
- Dye tracing
- Watching brief via sampling at other beaches

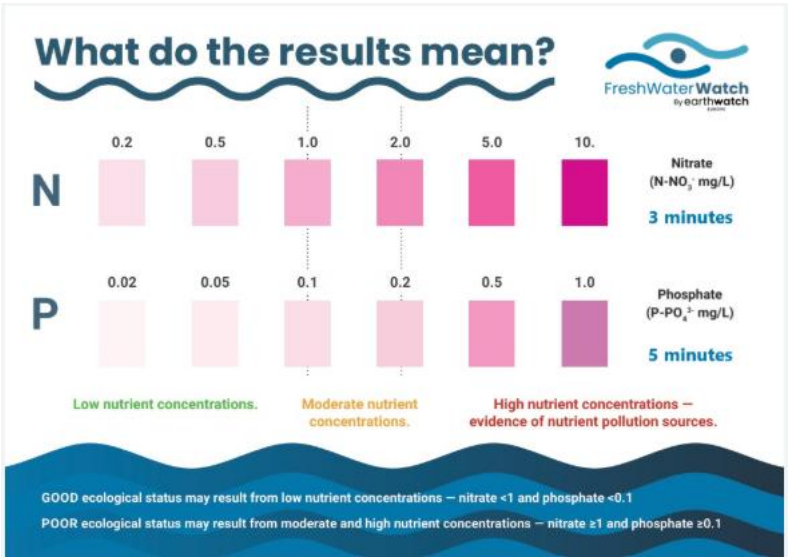
Nitrate Pollution (still to be updated)

As the competent authority, we are responsible for assessing farmers' compliance and enforcing the requirements of these regulations. We may visit farms and/or work with partners and/or employ surveillance techniques to do this. The checks we carry out are targeted according to the environmental outcome we want to see.

Map showing Nitrate vulnerable zones



[Great UK WaterBlitz Results | FreshWater Watch](#)



COLLABORATION: Outcomes for water

- Improved quality of surface, ground and coastal waters
- Protection, enhancement and multifunctional benefits
- Delivery of infrastructure required to support Development Plan housing and economic targets
- Avoidance of non-mains drainage treatment options
- LPAs take an integrated and catchment based approach to the water environment
- Reduction in Combined Sewer Overflows



COLLABORATION: Planning consultations

DAILY

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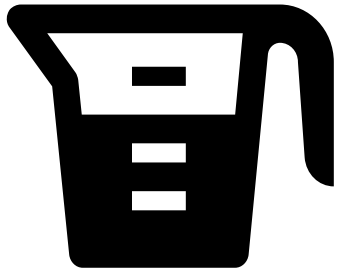
Heavy Rain Not A Problem For Cranbrook

We are also a Statutory Consultee for some planning applications. This means (LPAs) must consult us on these proposed developments.

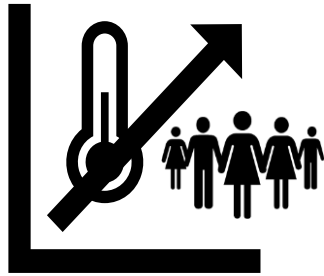
The National Planning Policy Framework states that decisions should :

- contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment
- prevent new and existing development from contributing to unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.
- development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality,
- take into account relevant information such as river basin management plans

COLLABORATION: Drainage & Waste Management Plans (DWMP)



CAPACITY



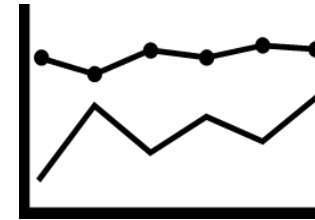
***CURRENT & FUTURE
DEMANDS***



RESILIENCE



***MEASURES
UNDERTAKER
INTENDS TO TAKE***



SEQUENCE & TIMING



***ENV. RISKS & HOW RISKS ARE
MITIGATED***

What can you do to help?



As a Local authority

- Misconnections
- Consideration to increased development
- Surface water connections/ infiltration

The public:

- So many incidents are caused by blockages:
- Wet wipes
- Fats, oils, grease