

South West Water Responses to Key Lines of Enquiry

Nitrates

Nitrates can be derived from a number of sources including agriculture, wastewater and general run off from a catchment. Hence, it depends on where the monitoring has been undertaken and the levels of nitrates. If there are concerns about the level of nitrates it would be prudent to share this information with the Environment Agency who have the strategic overview for water in England. SWW believe the Environment agency are attending the meeting. If their analysis indicates a particular source of this nitrate then will then direct the most appropriate action.

Regards safety, there are numerous other reasons that need to be taken into consideration beyond nitrates e.g. access, speed of flow, other hazard within a watercourse. SWW is not the responsible authority to advise on this.

For more detailed information on Nitrates, please find an Environment Agency report on line which was published in December 2024: [Nitrates: challenges for the water environment - GOV.UK](#)

Cockington and road closures

Regarding the Liaison Officer it would be helpful to understand the issues in more detail before we are able to respond.

Permission for roadworks are granted by the appropriate Highways Authority. In this case, this is Torbay Council. Utility providers e.g. Water companies, electricity companies, communication companies will apply to the Highways Authority to undertaken works. The Highways Authority will then assess this and make decisions on how these works will be managed regards traffic management and traffic flow. Utilities can apply for a traffic light management system but the Highways Authority may decide this does not manage the risks to the public sufficiently so may ask for a road closure and subsequent re-routing of traffic to take place.

South West Water Seasonal Tariff Trial Update, feedback from residents and businesses.

In this trial customers pay a lower price for their water usage in Autumn/Winter, but an elevated price in the Spring/Summer. SWW have commissioned ICS Consulting to evaluate the impact of the trials on customer behaviour through customer surveys and to model the impact on customer bills. The trials are ongoing, and our evaluation has not yet concluded. But initial modelling shows:

- 75% of initial customers remain on this trial.
- Detailed analysis is planned and SWW may be able to present further information at the meeting.

ICS performed customer surveys on their perception of the trials:

- One in eight customers believe the tariff will encourage reduced consumption.

- 17% perceive the trial as fair, with concerns raised about the lack of customer choice in participation. This is consistent with the feedback received throughout the trial.

To be able to measure the full impact on bills and consumptions, trials should continue until the end of the 2026/27 charging year. SWW have made presentations to Ofwat, CCW and WaterUK about the progressive tariff trials and continue to be transparent with them on the outcomes.

How many businesses asked to opt out but were unable to do so as only residents were able to opt out?

500 Non Households overall are on the Seasonal Tariff Trial with 75 that are Torbay based businesses, and as per our records only 4 have contacted SWW with the notes specifically mentioning the no opt-out process, implying or stating a request for removal. The reasons SWW made the trial compulsory was:

- **Representative Data:** A compulsory trial ensures that the data collected accurately reflects the general customer base, rather than a self-selecting group that might have different consumption patterns or financial circumstances.
- **Informing Future Charging:** The goal of the trial is to inform future, fairer, and more transparent ways of charging for water use, which requires comprehensive and unbiased data from a large group of customers.
- **Understanding Consumption:** To understand seasonal consumption patterns and their link to water usage, the trial needs to run for its full course and not be disrupted by opt-outs.

What lessons have been learn from the outbreak in Brixham (if possible)?

As discussed in our pre-meeting SWW are not in a position to discuss this matter.

What action is SWW taking to ensure that the sewer network has capacity to deal with Torbay's intended growth and capital programme?

- SWW's Developer Services team liaise with the planning team at Torbay to assess current and future needs. These inform SWW's investment plans.
- Drainage and Waste Water Management Plans and Water Resources Management Plans provide a strategic view out to 25 years.
- The Government's revised housing targets will need to be accommodated in SWW's investment plans going forward. SWW will need to know how Torbay will be responding to this in the Local Plan.

How we can better position Torbay as a stronger partner with SWW and the Environment Agency.

Some ideas include:

- Convene strategic conversations on a sufficiently frequent basis between Torbay Council and major service providers to share opportunities and risks.
- Ensure the Local Plan includes the updated Government housing targets to enable investment decisions to be made in a timely manner.
- Work closely on the impacts of climate change specifically to understand our specific roles in managing surface water flooding and links to storm overflows. Case studies will be provided to outline our specific concerns.
- Promote customer behaviour through council channels to help protect the environment as per below.
- Prompt reporting of incidents e.g. leakages, pollution promptly to ensure and effective response can be made.
- Use our dedicated Council Enquiries email address for locally elected members queries, where we can log, track and respond in a timely manner.

What action can residents take to support the water and sewerage network?

- Promote our 'Love you Loo' campaign i.e. only flush pee, poo and paper down the loo. By doing this it stops wet wipes entering our network which can cause blockages to occur and stop our pumps for working effectively. In some instances, this can lead to pollutions occurring and storm overflows operating. A link to our 'Love Your Loo' campaign can be found here: [Bin it don't block it | South West Water](#)
- Promote our 'Think Sink' campaign. Avoid pouring Fats Oils and Greases (or FOG) down the kitchen sink as these can cause "fatbergs" which again cause blockages and can lead to pollutions and storm overflow operation. A link to our 'Think Sink' campaign can be found here. [Bin it don't block it | South West Water](#)
- When considering building extensions which include plumbing of new toilets, sinks, washing machine ensuring they are connected to the correct pipe work. We continue to find mis-connections across our network that have occurred because of wrongly connected pipe work. These can lead to pollutions occurring. There is also a role for Building Regulations to ensure this is assessed and understood.
- Promote water efficient measures e.g. water efficient shower heads, not running the tap when brushing your teeth, installing a water butt. These will help both save water and reduce bills for those on meters as less water is used. There is lots of information here: [Save water | South West Water](#)
- Support our Tariff Trials.

Annual update on SWW activities, including storm overflows, background to price rises for SWW, highlights of delivery of the Storm Overflow Action Plan and a link to the Water Share Panel webpage.

- SWW charge increases can be found here in our detailed charges document here: [sww-household-charges-scheme-2025-26.pdf](#)
- A link to the WaterShare+ pages can be found here: [WaterShare+ | South West Water](#)
- All storm overflow improvements planned for our current Business Plan 2025 to 2030 are due for completion by 31 March 2030. The exception is for Cockington Lane Storm Overflow which is due for completion by 31 March 2029. These are regulatory dates set by the Environment Agency as part of the Water Industry National Environment Programme. We will liaise with Torbay Council and the Environment Agency to obtain the relevant permission and permits to complete these works.
- Bathing water classification for the 2025 season will be announced by Defra in the Autumn (this is usually in November).