

## How we engage with stakeholders

Our role is to balance the needs of our varied stakeholders, considering their diverse views in the development of our plans and activities.

There are many people and groups who take an interest in the water industry, its role in society, and the North West region. The nature of our work and the huge areas of land we manage means we interact with a wide variety of stakeholders, from communities and environmental interest bodies, to suppliers and regulators.

It is important that we understand what matters to each of them and develop constructive relationships built on mutual trust. We engage and consult with stakeholders to understand their views and priorities as we develop and execute our plans, balancing their often-conflicting priorities.

### Active engagement and responding to feedback

We engage with all of our stakeholders, including the six key groups for whom we create value and others that influence our activities. Strong, constructive relationships help us to understand what matters most to them, and their feedback has an influence on what we do, helping us to create long-term value for all.

There is robust governance to ensure regard is given to stakeholder views and priorities in decision-making at executive and board level. Our S172(1) Statement on pages 88 to 89 provides examples of how the board

has had regard to stakeholders in some of the key board decisions made during the year. The ESG committee has stakeholder engagement and reputation as standing agenda items.

The independent customer challenge group, YourVoice, aims to ensure that we put customers at the centre of our day-to-day service delivery, decision-making and formulation and delivery of our business plans. The chair of YourVoice attends the relevant board meeting each year to provide the group's perspective on the customer-related content in our annual performance report.



### Customers

To deliver value for customers, we need to understand their immediate issues, and longer-term expectations of us as their water and wastewater company. As expectations change, we need to evolve our services to ensure we meet them. We actively seek feedback on what customers think about our service so we can make our services better and address the issues that matter to them.



### Environment

We depend on the environment and have a key role in protecting and enhancing it. We engage with interested groups such as environmental regulators, non-governmental organisations, campaigners and local communities to find the best ways to tackle environmental issues, such as climate change and land management. Working together is often the best way to find the right solution.



### Communities

Our work puts us at the heart of local communities – places where customers and colleagues live and work. We want to support them to be stronger and increase understanding of the impact and contribution our work has. We balance decisions based on often-competing stakeholder interests and look to develop collaborative and partnership solutions where feasible.



### Colleagues

We could not deliver our services without our colleagues. They know the business better than anyone, bringing a diverse range of views and experience, making them well placed to identify new ways of working and opportunities for improvement, which can be raised directly to the CEO through our 'Call it Out' initiative. We host regular all-colleague events to share and discuss our future plans.



### Suppliers

Good relationships help ensure projects are delivered effectively and efficiently. Awareness of issues in the supply chain means we can address them together and become more resilient. Supplier engagement can also help us identify and realise innovative approaches and solutions. Collaboration with our suppliers is key to driving efficient delivery of our business plans.



### Investors

It is important that investors have confidence in the organisation and how it is managed. We provide regular updates to debt and equity investors to establish a two-way dialogue about matters of interest to them. Increasingly, this includes environmental, social and governance (ESG) updates alongside financial and performance data.



### Media

The media is influenced by current public interests and, in turn, the media also has the power to influence the public through what it reports. Many people hear about us and our activities from traditional and/or social media, so it is important that coverage is fair, balanced and accurate. This requires effective two-way dialogue, and we continuously engage with local and national media on important issues.



### Politicians

Politicians influence the long-term national water strategy and environmental priorities, matters that affect how all businesses operate, and champion issues raised by their constituents. Local government, elected representatives and devolved administrations provide insight into shared environmental, social and economic issues across the North West.



### Regulators

Through proactive, constructive engagement with economic, quality and environmental regulators, we understand requirements and deliver against commitments, aiming to meet, or exceed, the expectations they have of our business. We actively engage in workshops and respond to consultations to contribute towards the policy and regulatory framework.