

**UNITED UTILITIES WATER:
DRAINAGE AND WASTEWATER
MANAGEMENT PLANS (DWMP) ONLINE
STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS**

FEEDBACK REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2022



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INTRODUCTION

In September 2022, United Utilities Water (Uuw) hosted three online stakeholder workshops to present their draft Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP). This draft is anticipated to develop into a 25-year plan, setting out Uuw's long-term approach for sustainable drainage and wastewater management across the North West, along with the way in which the company intends to ensure that the region thrives, now and in the future.

The aim of these workshops was to seek feedback from key stakeholders to help Uuw develop its DWMP and identify opportunities for partnership working. There were also opportunities for stakeholders to ask questions about the DWMP consultation. It was noted that feedback given in these sessions would be incorporated into the formal Draft Consultation Response, wherever possible. The workshops were hosted virtually, using Microsoft Teams. Electronic voting rounds were held, using Slido, at various points during the workshops in order to consolidate the stakeholder feedback provided in the breakout rooms.

The workshops were split into three sessions:

- Session 1: Partnerships
- Session 2: Surface Water Management
- Session 3: The Preferred Plan

United Utilities Water instructed EQ Communications, a specialist stakeholder engagement consultancy, to independently facilitate the workshops and to take notes of the comments made by stakeholders. In order to ensure that all stakeholders were able to speak as candidly as possible, comments have not been attributed to individuals. Stakeholder comments reflect information presented at the workshops, and not the DWMP as a whole. Further details are included within the draft DWMP's publication documents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshops began with a presentation to give stakeholders some background and context, as well as an introduction to the DWMP. It was then explained that the DWMP aimed to focus on the challenges faced across the whole drainage and wastewater system from today to 2050. Slido polling data (Figure 1) indicated that the most common stakeholder type among workshop participants was Environment Agency representatives, who comprised 29% of electronic voting respondents, followed by local authority flood risk officers (24%) and River Trust (12%); environmental organisation representatives (10%) were also well represented.

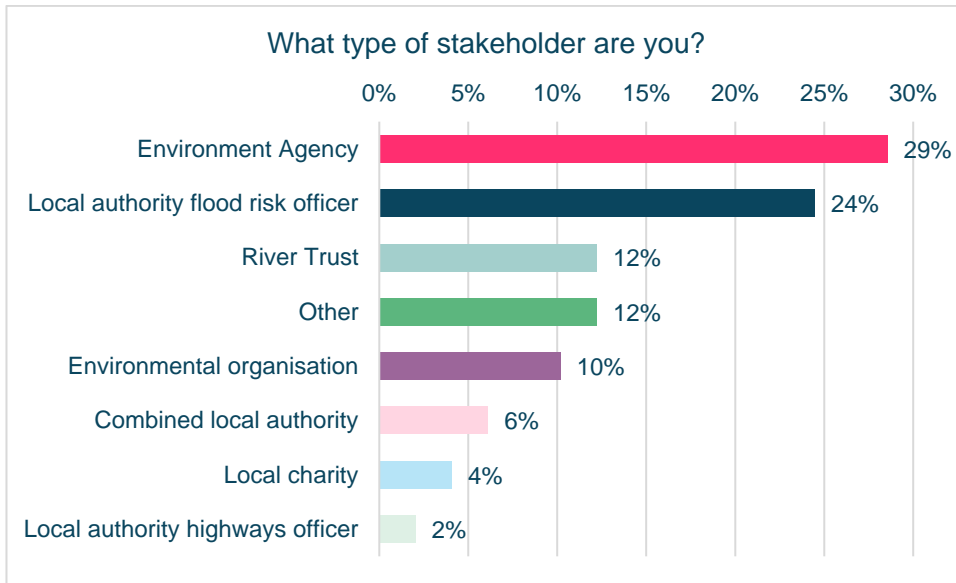


Figure 1: Breakdown of participants by stakeholder type

SESSION 1: PARTNERSHIPS

The first presentation highlighted the importance of partnership working, as well as U UW’s strategic partnership capabilities, and various strategic partner plans were presented. The engagement trajectory of the DWMP to date was showcased, and stakeholders were shown the Partnership Opportunities Pipeline and the proposed next steps in the process. Stakeholders then moved into breakout rooms for discussion, before being asked to vote on a number of propositions in order to elicit quantitative as well as qualitative feedback.

Common themes included data sharing, approaches to foundational working, and intelligence around assets and leakage.

- Better data sharing was seen as vital in order to facilitate greater partnership working, and there were calls for common data standards between all parties.
- It was acknowledged that effective partnership working is restricted by differences in timelines, such as U UW and local authority investment plans.
- U UW were praised for their work with catchment partnerships and encouraged to further their foundational engagement with customers.

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- It was felt that engagement with highway authorities and National Highways was particularly important, given the pollution impacts of highways.
 - Intelligence around assets and leakage was identified as an area that could benefit from streamlining the process between organisations.
 - Getting meetings and traction with people on the ground was raised as being challenging by some stakeholders.

SESSION 2: SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT

The second presentation outlined UUW's approach to resolving risk. It also included UUW's options development process, along with the company's options hierarchy. After the presentation, stakeholders were asked to discuss this and to give their feedback on UUW's approach, with particular regard to surface water management.

Common themes included reducing demand, involving local authorities and developers, and taking a holistic approach.

- Stakeholders were largely of the view that options for reducing service demand and managing rainwater entering the sewer system were broadly comprehensive, although questions were raised concerning the wider engagement and resource issue impacting drought management plans.
- There were calls for the integration of options, including behavioural change to ensure that there is a holistic approach. An evidence-based approach favouring efficiency and cost-effectiveness was seen as vital.
- Retrofitting was seen as a priority for addressing sewer capacity and overflows.
- Within blue and green surface water management, monitoring and managing catchment were considered valuable. Caution was raised regarding the location of green and blue surface water management projects because inner-city areas could not viably host natural sustainable drainage systems.
- Catchment partnerships were viewed as key, not least as they encourage collaboration between UUW and relevant third parties.
- It was felt that local authorities should be involved from the outset, and it was suggested that UUW should explore ways to seek people with the necessary skillset to deliver on their requirements.
- The point was made that developers should be engaged with at an early stage, particularly for work around garden villages and other large housing developments.
- The need to establish best practice for engaging with landowners was raised.

SESSION 3: THE PREFERRED PLAN

The third presentation outlined UUW's three planning objectives, as well as their respective metrics and the mechanisms addressing them. Stakeholders were then shown UUW's Decision Support Tool. The distribution of over £3.6 billion of investment over 25 years was presented, as well as the geographical distribution of investment by option type. Stakeholders were then asked to give their feedback on UUW's Preferred Plan.

Common themes included praise for UUW's engagement on the plan to date, the difficulty of reaching certain groups, and routes for engagement.

- Stakeholders spoke positively about how UUW had managed to fit such a complicated plan into one set of documents. It was generally felt that the DWMP gave useful insight into pressures and opportunities in the future.
- Stakeholders were broadly comfortable with how the plan had been prepared. UUW were praised for their work on the preferred plan, but were encouraged to engage with groups that may have been missed so far.
- Stakeholders raised the benefits of catchment-based solutions, and catchment management groups were considered an effective route for engagement.
- There were calls for greater integration in urban centres for dealing with surface water.
- Given the evolving nature of the wider picture towards 2050, a flexible approach was encouraged.
- There were questions as to whether UUW were tracking visitor numbers to tourist areas such as Windermere and adjusting the approach to infrastructure accordingly.
- Flood risk management plans were among a number of complex long-term projects which presented opportunities.
- Programmes incorporating nature-based solutions and biodiversity across the catchment were discussed and seen as important.

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

After the workshop, stakeholders were asked to complete a short feedback form. Some of the key findings are shown below. A full breakdown of the feedback can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

- 75% of attendees who filled out a feedback form told us that they found the workshop to be 'interesting', and 8% found the workshop 'very interesting'.
- 58% 'agreed' and 25% 'strongly agreed' that they had had an opportunity to get involved in the discussions and make their points.
- 83% felt 'engaged' in the session; a further 8% felt 'very engaged'.
- 75% 'agreed' and 8% 'strongly agreed' that the right topics for them were covered on the day.
- 33% thought EQ Communications' facilitation was 'very good', a further 33% thought it was 'good'.

SESSION 1: PARTNERSHIPS

The workshop opened with background and context, as well as an introduction to the DWMP. It was explained that the DWMP aimed to focus on the challenges faced across the whole drainage and wastewater system until 2050, and that the DWMP would set out how U UW intended to maintain a robust and resilient drainage and wastewater system in the North West.

The DWMP publication timeline was also shown to stakeholders, and it was noted that the 12-week consultation underway for the DWMP draft would remain open until 22nd September 2022 (Figure 2). The three-level DWMP structure was presented to stakeholders, as well as the DWMP process, from Strategic Context through to Plan Production. It was flagged that the formulation of the draft DWMP was a co-creation process with stakeholders, and a number of stakeholder feedback items were shown against the resulting actions by U UW.

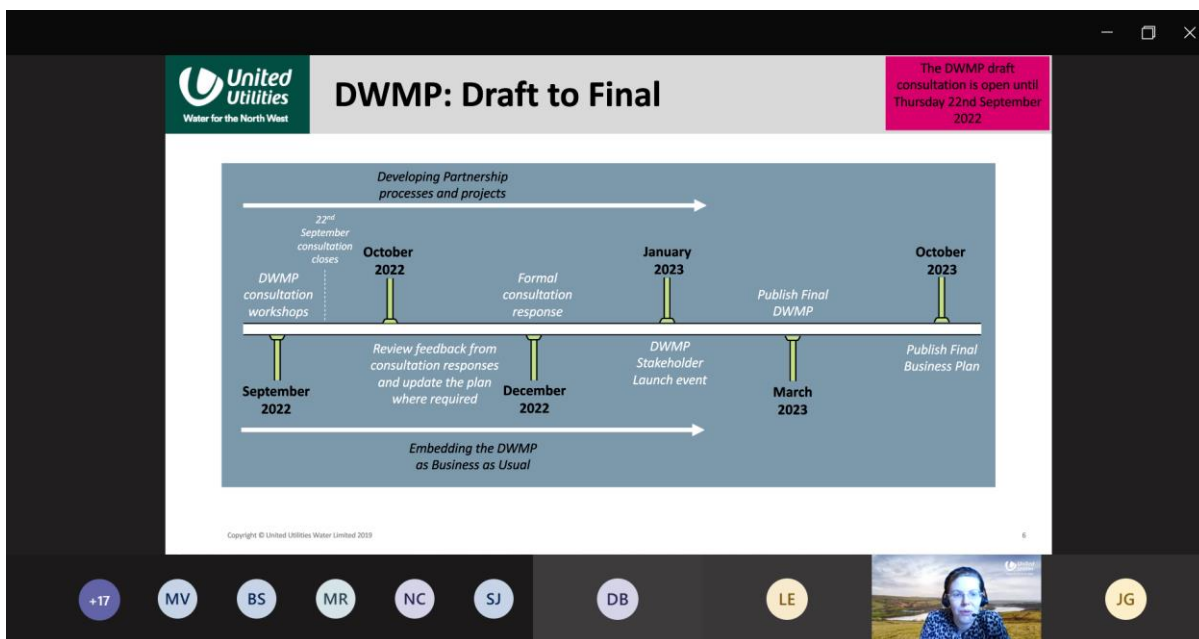


Figure 2: DWMP timeline from draft to final

The next part of the presentation focused on U UW's strategic partnership capabilities, and various strategic partner plans were presented (Figure 3). These involved stakeholders such as the Environment Agency (EA), catchment and coastal groups, and local flood and planning authorities. These plans had the key aim of either improving the environment or reducing flood risk and erosion. The engagement trajectory on the DWMP to date was showcased, and it was noted that 14 Strategic Planning Groups (SPGs) were created to focus on a catchment level, and on partnership working for the DWMP. Stakeholders were then shown the Partnership Opportunities Pipeline, and next steps were specified, including partnership working to further develop projects identified as short-term opportunities, as well as process identification to promote partnership projects through the Price Review.

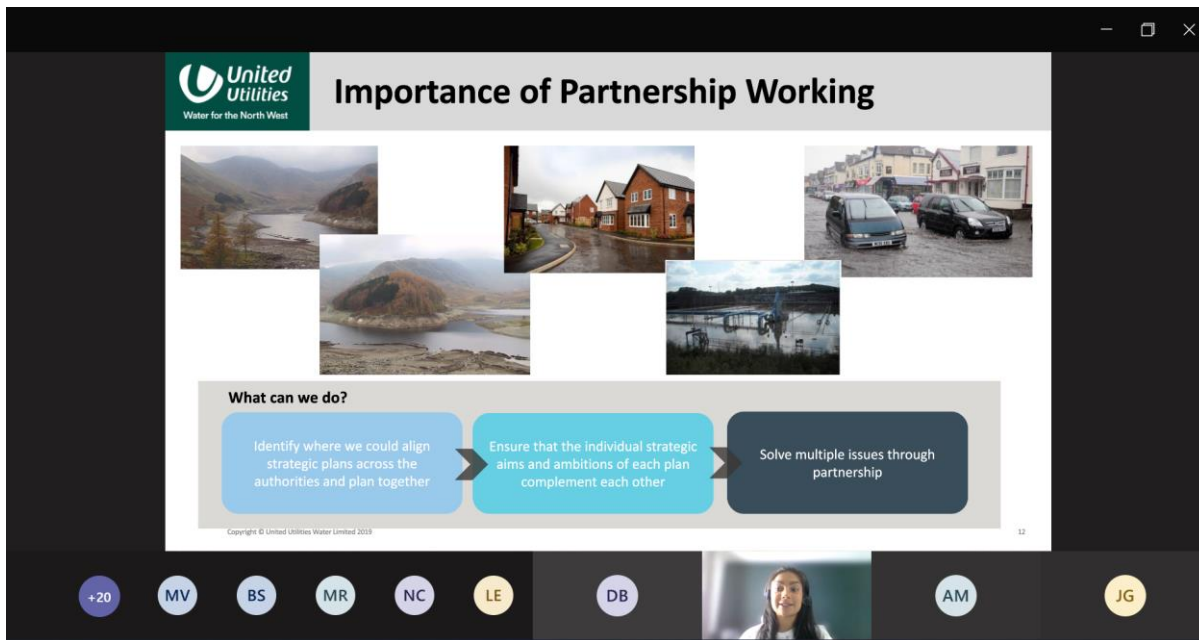


Figure 3: The importance of partnership working within the development of DWMP

Stakeholders then moved into breakout rooms for discussion, before a round of electronic voting using Slido.

In the breakout rooms, better data sharing was identified as being a key opportunity area for greater partnership working, in addition to improved mapping and communication. A National Park Authority stakeholder called for common data standards between agencies to facilitate this. An Environment Agency representative added that better data sharing would allow for better time efficiencies. Stronger coordination through modelling was also deemed useful, and the need for longer lead times for projects was suggested by a Rivers Trust participant, as it was felt that short timescales led to reactive working. Contact lists for discussing DWMP issues were requested in the discussions. A local authority flood officer highlighted a need for common data-sharing standards, with clear details of what data can and cannot be shared. An Environment Agency participant called for UUW to be as open as possible with their data, particularly in order to assist data overlay on sewerage. Privacy settings, mapping platform inconsistencies and licences were identified as barriers to better data sharing.

In general, a joined-up approach based on foundational working was also considered to be preferable to a top-down strategy. One Rivers Trust participant asserted that a 'you said, we did' document would be useful for understanding how UUW had decided on 13 out of 130 potential partnership opportunities to be taken forward.

While stakeholders felt that UUW had largely engaged with the right organisations, highways authorities were suggested as being important partners by an environmental organisation representative, given the pollution impacts of highways. A local authority flood risk officer suggested that there were already partnerships under the Regional Flooding Coastal Committees (RFCCs) for the North West, which contained many relevant groups, and it was felt that UUW could tap into these as part of the engagement

process. UUW's partnership work in Cheshire East and on Merseyside was praised by a local authority flood risk stakeholder. It was commented that this had been a positive experience despite the regulatory conflicts. In terms of specific collaboration opportunities, a National Park Authority participant proposed that DWMP could fit in quite well with UUW's triage, and asked whether UUW had looked into building the Peak District National Park into this. It was added that there were opportunities for deeper working on biodiversity projects, such as the extensive work on Cumbria's natural parks and local 'green plan' initiatives. It was believed that these could dovetail into the DWMP.

One stakeholder identified nature recovery strategies as missing from the presentation, adding that UUW should first organise their approach by geographical area before working on different plans. WINEP was cited as being a problem area in this respect. UUW was praised by an Environment Agency representative for its work with catchment partnerships, and encouraged to further its foundational engagement with customers.

Obtaining meetings and gaining traction with people on the ground were considered challenging by one major user. A local authority flood risk officer shared that their experience of partnership working with UUW had been broadly positive, but made the point that intelligence around assets and leakage was an area that could benefit from streamlining the process between organisations. Closer work on investigations was proposed. Partnership continuity was flagged as a concern, with staff moving between different roles. Turnover and capacity were also cited as issues that could lead to extended timescales, and there were calls for all parties to discuss strategic priorities jointly.

During the electronic vote session, stakeholders were asked to rank ten items in terms of importance, where '10' indicated highest importance. The following figures are averaged responses from all stakeholders. 'Funding' was of highest importance, closely followed by 'Resource' and 'Communication'.

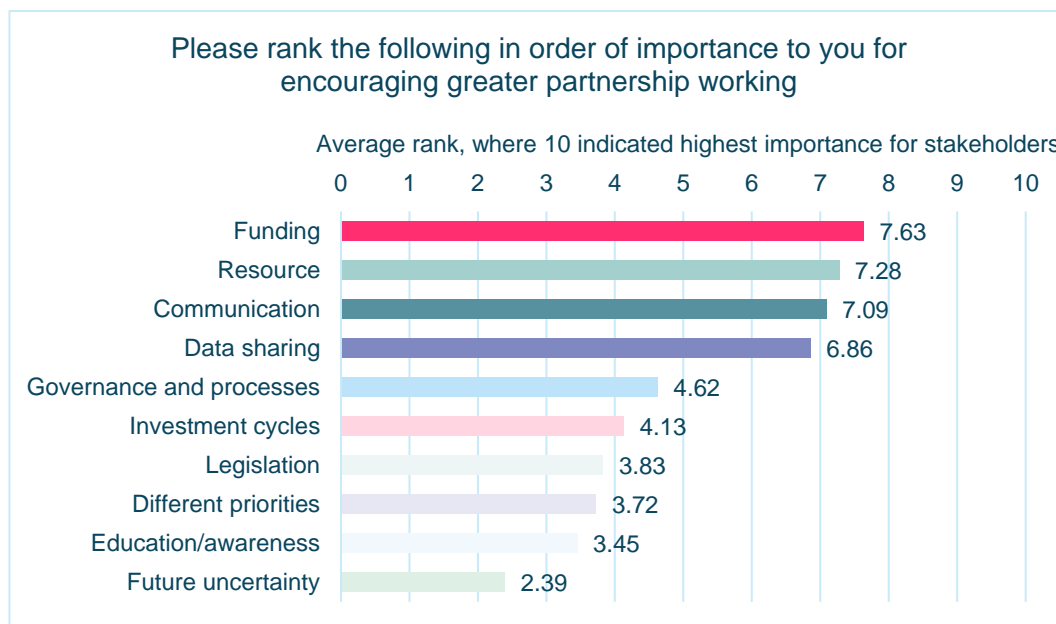


Figure 4: Stakeholders ranking of importance for encouraging greater partnership working.

FEEDBACK

1. What do you think needs to change in order to allow for greater partnership working?

Better mapping, better data sharing, sharing of plans etc.

- “It would be helpful to have common data standards between agencies.” National Park Authority
- “There needs to be a longer lead-in time for projects being developed, as we’re too reactive otherwise owing to short timescales.” Rivers Trust
- “Better data exchange would save people having to chase on both sides. Trust between working partners is key too. Things like U UW not trusting the flood risk side because they might pass information to the environmental prosecution side can lead to data not being shared. There are also public implications for this. If EA and U UW flooding figures differ, this can cause confusion. Modelling things that could be better coordinated would also be useful.” Environment Agency
- “Turnover and capacity are issues that can lead to extended timescales and failure of partnerships. We can struggle when our priorities differ from partners’. Perhaps we could discuss strategic priorities jointly.” Environment Agency
- “Having contact lists for issues relating to DWMP would be good.” Local authority director
- “It’s my team that deals with mapping and from my perspective, the difficulty in data sharing is that we have a statutory duty to respond to customer requests. That’s where the bulk of our resources is being spent. When we are firefighting customer requests, it makes it hard for us to focus on other areas. There are also difficulties in the GIS spatial mapping world. There are not many GIS specialists out there, and that’s what you need to master the data. We’re struggling to recruit, as private organisations can offer them more attractive packages.” Environment Agency
- “I agree with the comments made around data sharing. We are setting out data standards: how can we have one baseline across the board? Standards could help smooth things over. As for our partnership working, this works very well, and we are very proud of it. In terms of how we improve that, it’s about depth. We tend to work with senior colleagues, but what about the ‘doers’ working on the ground of the national park? This approach is starting to work well in Windermere, but how do we do it so that whole network teams from both organisations are working together? Reflecting on the environment and strategic plans, the national park plan is about transformative action for public benefit. Have you included that? I can see that our local plan would have fitted into your local plan area, and I’m sure you have the key local stuff covered, but I wonder about the national park plan and how that fits in.” National Park Authority
- “It’s as basic as mapping our challenges. Within each organisation, we all try to do that in our own way. One of our challenges is overlaying those different maps. We all share challenges, but communicating them in a standardised format through the DWMP is something we’ve tried to do. We want to support United Utilities Water. I’m interested in cross-referencing what we know to be our ground truths with how they appear in the DWMP in simple, relatable terms.” Local authority flood risk officer

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- “A ‘you said, we did’ would be useful. For example, one of the first slides mentioned the number of partnership opportunities. You mentioned that there were 130 opportunities and only 13 of these are to be taken forward. How did we get from such a huge number to such a small number? I’d like to see the thinking behind some of your decisions.” Rivers Trust
 - “I think that there needs to be a slight change of headspace towards investment plans about all of the organisations involved in partnership working. For example, local authority investment plans come in three-year cycles, while United Utilities Water lasts five years. You either need to standardise these cycles or find a mechanism for factoring them in in a streamlined way. Building on this, within the different organisations involved, there needs to be a more joined-up approach based on foundational working from those filters upwards, rather than a top-down strategy. By doing so, the right people will come together in partnership and hopefully come up with a unified approach.” Local authority flood risk officer

2. Have we engaged with the right organisations?

Were there other organisations we should have engaged with?

- “I think most groups have been covered.” Environment Agency
- “I think we know what we want and are covered going forward.” Environment Agency
- “Highway authorities and National Highways are missing as a pollution source. An important partner is missing from the conversation.” Environmental organisation
- “Nature recovery strategy is missing from your slides. You should approach by geographical areas first and then divide into different plans. WINEP is difficult to address in this regard.” Environmental organisation.
- “I haven’t been involved in the DWMPs but from what I’ve seen, most organisations have been covered. I know there has been difficulty in terms of consistency and resource issues across the Environment Agency, but I can’t think of anyone we’ve missed.” Environment Agency
- “There’s always room for improvement. A lot of the work you have done with catchment partnerships has been good. The only thing I’m not sure of is how you’ve engaged with the customer base at a more foundational level. Is there anything around engaging more with your customers rather than the big organisations and charities? I haven’t been aware of that foundational part of the consultation so perhaps it needs to be communicated better, if not improved.” Environment Agency
- “From what I’ve seen, most people have been covered within this strategy. I can’t think of anyone obvious that has been missed out.” Environment Agency

3. What would facilitate better partnership working?

Funding, resource, legislation, data sharing, investment cycles, education/awareness, communication, future uncertainty, different priorities, governance and processes?

- “We have 6000 acres around Knutsford, Tatton and that sort of area. I’ve engaged with you a lot on the natural landscape. We should find it really easy to work with you, but we don’t. Our team has had lots of questions in terms of looking at the sewage treatment plant in Knutsford and being more ambitious with the strategy. It’s really difficult to work with you in this respect as we do not get one-on-one traction. Getting meetings and traction with people on the ground is challenging.” Major user
- “I think we’ve broadly had a positive experience with U UW besides some areas of conflict. Leakage and intelligence around assets is an area where we can have back and forth with organisations around flooding. We could work more closely together with investigations. Resourcing and consistency of staff across respective organisations is a key challenge because of opportunities cropping up. We have one common strand in the public-facing customer.” Local authority flood risk officer
- “Catchment partnership meetings are very useful.” Environment Agency
- “We do have separate meetings with United Utilities Water on flood risk issues on a regional level. There are always data issues and it’s about being as open as you can with your data as a private company. At the Environment Agency, we naturally have open data, being a government body. Being able to overlay some of the more delicate data on sewerage has been tricky, with homeowners involved in the assets and the GDPR concerns around using their data.” Environment Agency
- “One bit of progress that has been made is having the flood risk partnership manager. For us that was Sharma, but I think she’s moving on. That’s actually another issue: people do move around quite a lot within United Utilities Water, so how can you ensure continuity?” Local authority flood risk officer
- “We’ve also had a lot of obstacles over the years with data sharing. In particular, we’ve had issues around different privacy settings and licences, and inconsistencies across mapping platforms. This has made bringing everything together to share really challenging.” Environment Agency
- “It would be really good if we enhance our communications as part of our partnership work, in order to ensure that our work is complementing each other. If we knew exactly what United Utilities Water needs from us, that would have a real impact. I do think that things are moving in the right direction with this, however.” Environment Agency
- “Having a standardisation between organisations would really help, as lots of people have been doing a lot of good stuff around data compiling and mapping work in their own silos. If these data were standardised, they could bring so much value.” National Park Authority

4. What could your organisation do to contribute to improved partnership working?

- “There’s already a partnership under the regional coastal committees for the North West which contains many relevant groups. You can tap into them as part of your engagement.” Local authority flood risk officer

5. What is working well for partnerships in the North West?

- “I think that the partnership work has been positive overall in Cheshire East and on Merseyside. Despite the regulatory conflicts, the experience has been positive on the whole. Of course, there have been issues, but we have been collectively proactive with solving them. One area not mentioned is leakages and awareness of asset condition. I would say that there is more that can be done there. In addition, I would suggest efforts around getting a consistent staff structure in place across the North West and equipping it properly. That is why the other stakeholder had issues getting meetings.” Local authority flood risk officer

6. Are there any specific opportunities for collaboration in your areas that you have not already raised throughout the DWMP process?

- “DWMP could fit in quite well for your triage. Have you looked into building the national park into this?” National Park Authority
- “We do work together with lead local authorities as part of partnership work around flooding projects and natural flood management measures, as well as funding for such initiatives. We know what we want and need to keep charging forward on these kinds of initiatives.” Environment Agency
- “I think that there are opportunities for deeper working on biodiversity projects. For example, the extensive work on Cumbria’s natural parks and the local ‘green plan’ initiatives can definitely dovetail into the DWMP with the right work.” National Park Authority

SESSION 2: SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT

The second presentation outlined U UW’s approach to resolving risk, linked with the three Baseline Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (BRAVA) areas of flooding, water quality, and environment. The options development process was presented, including the narrowing down and ‘rejection’ of unfeasible options in each Tactical Planning Unit. U UW’s options hierarchy for prioritising option types in the Preferred Options Blend was then presented to workshop attendees.

On options development, it was explained that the breakdown of optimised activities varied significantly between planning authorities, since different needs and priorities had been identified in different areas. The partnership opportunities for managing surface water were considered vast, and upstream management was an option selected for every planning authority (Figure 5).

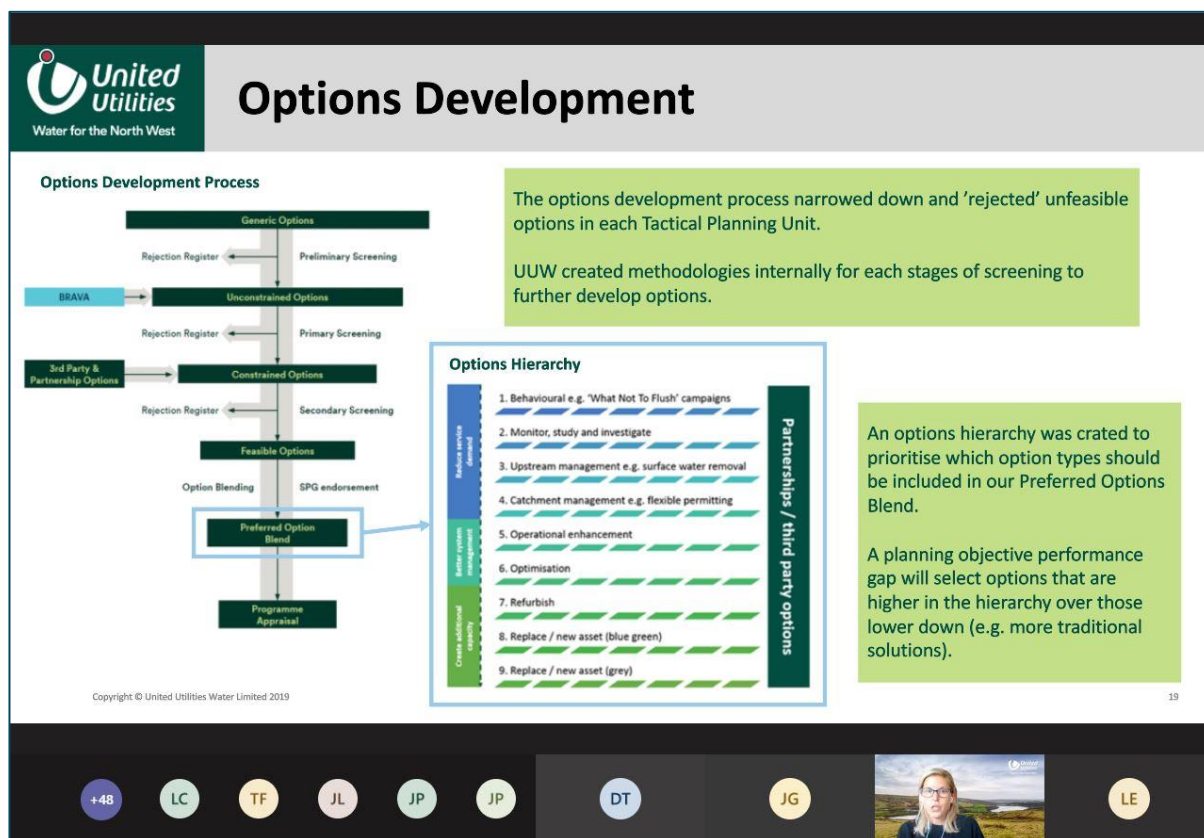


Figure 5: DWMP options development process

Stakeholders voiced that the options for reducing service demand and managing rainwater entering the sewer system were broadly comprehensive. That said, questions were raised concerning the wider engagement and resource issue impacting drought management plans. It was noted that surface water management requires broad and holistic approaches. Monitoring and managing of catchments were seen as valuable within an approach combining green and blue surface water management. A local authority flood risk representative urged caution regarding the location of green and blue surface water management projects because inner-city areas could not viably host natural sustainable drainage systems. A major user

spoke favourably of a project funded by UUW to reduce local river flow by spreading it naturally to return it to the way in which it had flowed prior to the installation of drainage assets.

In terms of specific audiences to target, catchment partnerships were viewed as key by Environment Agency participants. A National Park Authority representative added that these also offered good networking opportunities. It was commented that local authorities should be involved in surface water management from the outset, as stated by Rivers Trust and Environment Agency representatives. A National Park Authority representative suggested that UUW should consider ways to seek people with the necessary skillset to deliver on their requirements. It was also noted that developers should be targeted, particularly for work around garden villages. A local authority director pointed out that upscaling natural solutions would require increased engagement with, and support for, land managers. There was also a need to establish best practices for engaging with external landowners, possibly by providing a menu of localised options tailored to each landowner.

Major users expressed interest in exploring joint opportunities for surface water management, and there was a desire to engage creatively in the long term. Environment Agency participants acknowledged challenges with separation using combined sewer systems. It was commented that focusing on fluvial risk allowed the identification of additional risks around sewage and surface water, an area in which business planning timescales appeared to falter.

An Environment Agency stakeholder focused on water quality noted that their historic approach working with UUW around combined sewer overflows involved infrastructure provision, storage, treating more at treatment works, and creating better infrastructure. A challenge was identified in getting relatively clean water out of the system, moving away from hard engineering solutions and looking to at-source solutions.

After the discussions, stakeholders were asked through electronic voting which three option categories their organisations valued the most (Figure 7). 'Upstream management' was most valued, with almost 87% choosing it as one of their options. Stakeholders were then asked which single option category their organisation used the most often (Figure 8). Both 'Monitor, study and investigate' and 'Catchment management' received 25% of the vote, while 'Upstream management' was the third most often used at 23%. Finally, stakeholders were asked which three option categories their organisation would like to do the most (Figure 9). 'Upstream management' was once again the most popular choice, chosen by 74% of respondents, followed by 'Catchment management' and 'Monitor, study and investigate' at 47% and 45%, respectively.

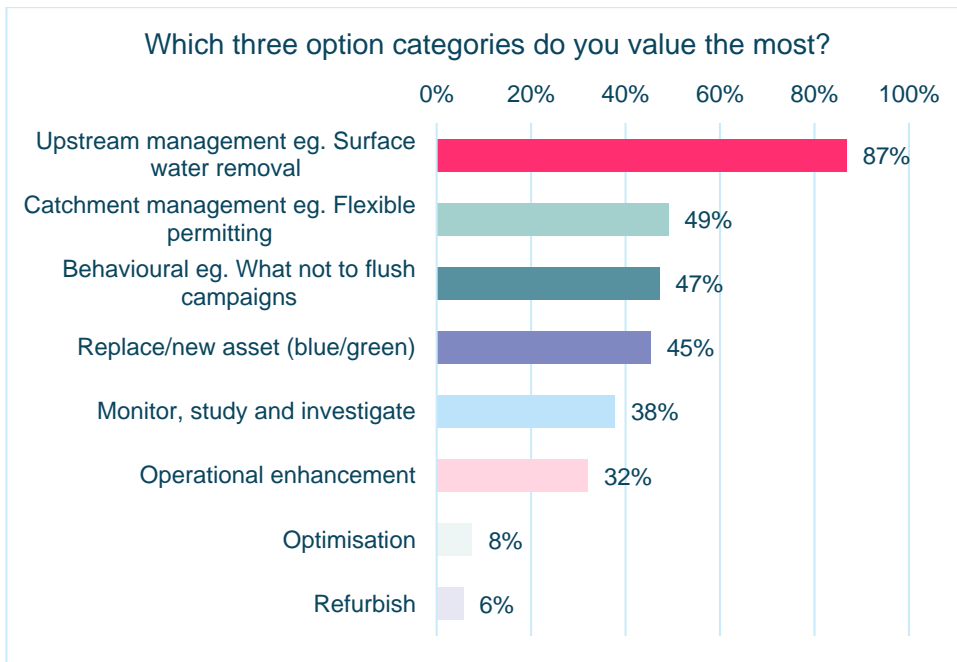


Figure 7: The options categories stakeholders' organisations valued the most. Figures sum to greater than 100%, as stakeholders were asked to choose three options.

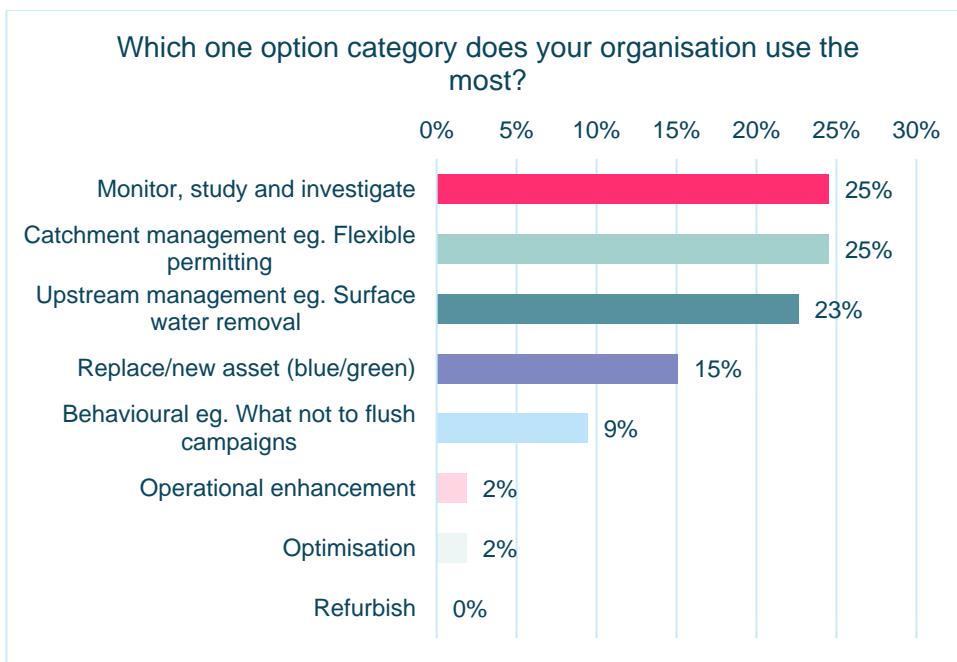


Figure 8: The options categories stakeholders' organisations use the most

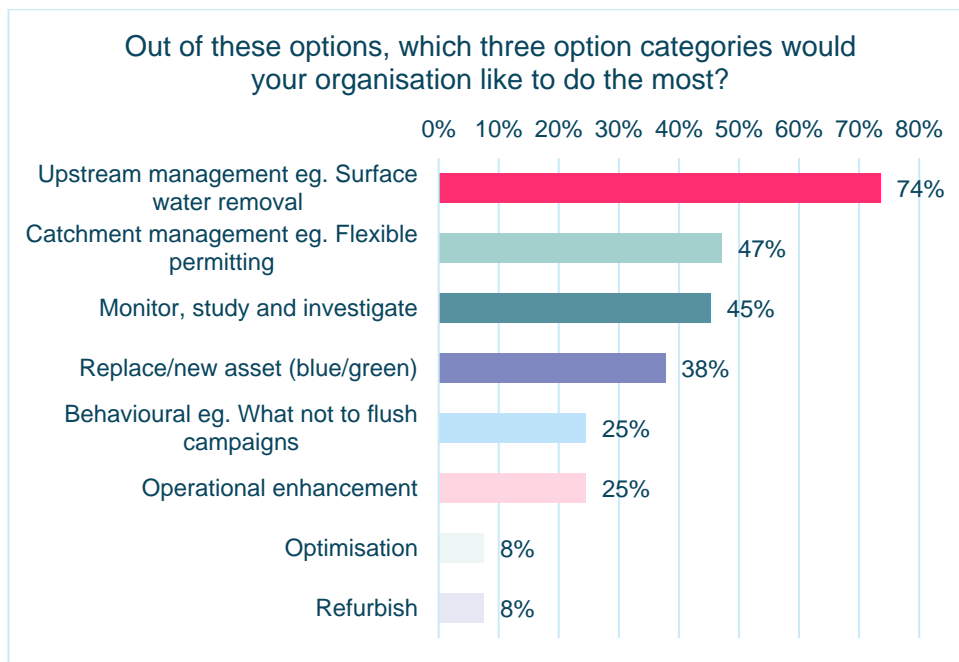


Figure 9: The three options categories stakeholder's organisations would like to use the most. Figures sum to greater than 100%, as stakeholders were asked to choose three options.

FEEDBACK

1. Do you have any suggestions for options to reduce service demand and manage rainwater entering the sewer system?

- “In terms of drought management plans, there’s a much bigger challenge around how we manage water. We do have some experience of these measures and are trying to benchmark them. It’s the wider engagement and resource issue we need to solve.” Local authority flood risk officer
- “We’ve got this far through the presentations, but no one has mentioned SuDS, which is a fundamental part of the legislation. 15 or 20 years ago, Defra’s challenge around flood management was encapsulated in the phrase ‘making space for water’, and we are still doing this now.” Local authority flood risk officer
- “Everything is on there but there are a lot of challenges attached to some of these solutions. I wonder about United Utilities Water’s ability to have control over an area like upstream management. We encounter issues with land ownership in terms of gaining approval and buy-in from tenants. How can we convince them to keep water upstream? It’s all down to money. Nobody wants to do something for nothing, so what money can you give to, say, farmers to encourage them to buy into these sorts of schemes and be prepared to change their farming practices as a result?” Environment Agency
- “Some of them need to be more integrated. You can have behavioural change alongside other ambitions. Where there is asset replacement, you can have a behavioural ambition too; I don’t think it has to be one or the other. Another comment is that I can’t see how this screening has been applied.” Rivers Trust

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- “The options and hierarchy are OK, but there are different locations with different needs. It’s about doing what is most efficient and cost effective. Having an evidence-based approach is important to inform what you do, and this is where the data-sharing piece comes into it.” Environment Agency
 - “Natural flood management is great, as it slows the flow higher up in the catchment. Our flood management teams really support it, but it requires funding. Sometimes it’s hard to get it, but it will be essential for the future.” Environment Agency
 - “Surface water mapping is the only area that my team handles. Having local data partnerships would help us to represent the risks better in local areas, as we would be able to present the maps that we host better. This would help us deal with ordinary consumers, as flood risks can affect property sales and home insurance quotes. Better mapping for the public would at least empower them to find the information that they need.” Environment Agency
 - “The general principle has got to be separating the freshwater and wastewater as far as possible, so we think that nature-based solutions and sustainable drainage systems need to be the focus, as well as investment in that. By introducing nature-based solutions, you’ll be achieving multiple goals, as you will be dealing with storm outflows, but also will be helping to protect natural environments.” Environmental organisation
 - “In addition, more broadly speaking, these options need to be designed to work at a local level, but also incorporate some region-wide principles.” Environmental organisation
 - “Our projects in the local flood resilience programmes look into water use at a local level, which brings together nature solutions and household mechanisms. We are hoping that these programmes can make a difference. We are in the planning stages and are hoping to get approval to work on them now.” Local authority director

2. How much can green/blue surface water management solve our shared issues alone?

- “We all need to work together on these things. We have to balance the environment and everything going on around us. Retrofitting of SuDS should be a focus in addition to new builds, if we’re going to make a difference with sewer capacity and overflows.” Combined local authority
- “Sometimes it’s hard to get our planners to put things on a planning application as a requirement. It’s something we’re asking for.” Local authority flood risk officer
- “There is a bit of a disconnect between planners and LPAs. Monitoring developer installations is important beyond just giving them conditions. Nobody is checking this, which is a huge issue.” Combined local authority
- “Building controllers aren’t really interested in drainage. It’s only the drainage officer that checks the way developers have done things. There is a gap in the law. Surprisingly the major developers do put in what they say. So, they must think that someone will check at some point. In our area UJW don’t think they need to put infrastructure into the roads for housing developments to connect to and this leads to suboptimal systems.” Local authority flood risk officer

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- “Schedule 3 of the Floods and Water Management Act would make SuDS mandatory on new developments. Part of that process is that they are inspected during construction and upon handover for adoption. There is a review of Schedule 3 underway and the results of that are with government. There is a glimmer of hope that this will be enacted in England. Water UK are probably lobbying for this on behalf of all water companies.” Environmental organisation
 - “I cover a lot of the more urban surface water management schemes. It requires a number of organisations to work very closely together. I was involved with the United Utilities Water consultation about 15 years ago now. They were talking about separating surface water from dirty water. Surface water itself can be very contaminated, particularly if it’s running from roads. Surface water is going into sewage treatment works. We need to think very broadly and holistically if we are separating surface water from sewage, and what the lifecycle of that is. Is it going directly into rivers? This is where blue and green solutions like swales come in. You need to work with the highway authorities, landowners, etc., and develop a strategic vision.” Environment Agency
 - “I think that a combination of both would help a lot. New assets are certainly required but monitoring and managing catchments have a role to play.” Environment Agency
 - “No, not at the moment. You have to put a lot of these measures in place and that will take a long time, so something that is quicker to roll out needs to fill in the gap in the meantime. At the same time, we’re doing a lot of urban development too, which means green areas getting taken away which would be perfect for nature-based solutions, so we need to strike a balance between these different interests. That being said, green/blue surface water management is a key component, and you should still definitely pursue it.” Environment Agency
 - “There needs to be more thought about the geographic location of these green/blue surface water management projects, as inner-city areas cannot really host natural sustainable drainage systems. Therefore, there need to be localised solutions where there is not enough space for nature-based solutions, and efforts need to be made to move things downstream, and these systems are all interconnected.” Local authority flood risk officer
 - “We were delighted to undertake a project funded by United Utilities Water in Longsleddale to reduce the local river flow, spreading it naturally to how it flowed prior to the installation of drainage assets. It was great to partner up on this and we believe that it presents a good way forward.” Major user

3. Do you think there are specific audiences we should target?

- “Catchment-based partnerships are really key. These present other biodiversity and integrated benefits. The more we can use this as an existing forum, the better.” Environment Agency
- “UUW are good at this. Local authorities should be involved in this process from the outset as they are dealing with this stuff on a daily basis. It does not appear that you are reaching the right people in this.” Rivers Trust

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- “Oddly local authorities have been involved earlier on in the process and then are not being invited back.” Environment Agency
 - “Even though we have been going six months on our Windermere project, we are still bringing in new stakeholders. You need to think about how to get people with the skillset to deliver what you need. It helps to ask people you know who to speak to. Catchment partnerships are a good way to network.” National Park Authority
 - “UW are quite present at catchment partnerships. These tend to be quite under-resourced as you’ll have a small number of managers covering large areas. To build and maintain quality relationships in those partnerships is a massive job. I still feel there are not enough catchment coordinators, but we have five coordinators for the same patch as one manager.” Environment Agency
 - “Coverage with staff could be greater. This would create capacity and foster more working partners.” Rivers Trust
 - “Developers should play a part in this. We are looking at garden villages, there is an opportunity to get in early and ensure these things get into the plans.” Environment Agency
 - “It often boils down to who owns the land in the area where you are trying to run your projects. Liaising with these people is very useful, but is, of course, very labour intensive.” Environment Agency
 - “I agree. Natural flood management is great, but it often includes lots of time-consuming engagement with landowners. If we want to do anything major, we cannot do it without talking to landowners.” Environment Agency
 - “The more that you upscale natural solutions, the more that you need to engage with land managers and also provide them with support. Building on that, you need to establish best practices for engaging with external landowners so that this is as smooth as possible. We have been engaging with United Utilities Water about these kinds of projects and the response has been mixed, as I suspect that there is no standard approach to engagement. Another way to improve engagement with external landowners would be to provide a menu of localised options tailored to each landowner.” Local authority director

4. Do you have any good examples of surface water management in your areas?

- “Partnerships often focus on wastewater, and this can be missed.” Environment Agency
- “The LF in Cumbria are doing a good job in pushing UW to get things over the line. Retrofitting is important but very expensive.” Local authority flood risk officer
- “For any development of 10 homes or more and sometimes five or more, our flood teams insist on fitting in the drainage proforma. I was wondering if many other districts do this, as it works well for us. We get a lot of information from developers on SuDS. I don’t know if this is a wider issue or if it’s more uncommon across the north west. Sometimes we ask for separate validation reports, but our senior engineer goes in with the intention of checking on-site.” Local authority director

-
- “I work for Greater Manchester Combined Authority. We’ve seen natural flood management projects being delivered for many reasons, but it tends to be niche and at a small scale. How do we move that forward to a more strategic level so that United Utilities Water and others reap the benefits? From our point of view, we’re working on our response to the DWMP consultation and have responded to Environment Agency’s flood risk consultation, but how do these things join up? We’re thinking about water quality and the EU Water Directive as well as integrated water management so we can deliver more across the piece rather than just for water quality, for instance. We are working towards a more integrated view of the world of water.” Combined local authority
 - “Thacka Beck in Penrith is a good example. It’s a flood storage area for the river as well as for surface water. It’s now managed by Cumbria Wildlife Trust. They secured funding and it’s now a nicely established nature reserve. That said, I appreciate that you are much more constrained in urban areas.” Environmental organisation
 - “Haweswater was the second sustainable management plan area that United Utilities Water undertook and it’s an example of extremely good practice. United Utilities Water and RSPB work very well together on these areas.” Environmental organisation
 - “I’m not sure about good examples necessarily, but there’s lots of examples of where it needs managing, and obviously we have the challenge of the ageing sewage system. In the Lakes, we have high rainfall and insufficient infrastructure to cope with it. This results in combined sewage overflow issues. Tourism and seasonality is certainly a factor, and with climate change, the impact of flash rainfall and high rainfall isn’t so winter-based anymore – it’s happening through the year. Also, while we do have areas with a high level of tourism influx, we’ve got rural populations too. We need to look at how we best support non-mains in small communities where we can gather rural properties together on shared systems.” Environment Agency
 - “There have been lots of projects since Desmond involving landowners, but the engagement around them has often boiled down to individual conversations. These have helped with encapsulating local specificities and needs for surface water management, however.” Environment Agency
 - “We’ve explored using nature-based solutions for flood management in our area. For example, in Dovenby, we’ve introduced flood management ponds and wetlands to help us deal with flooding issues. They are capturing a lot of surface water, which is protecting the village from flooding.” Rivers Trust

5. Any joint opportunity in your area for surface water management?

- “We’ve done quite a lot of work with Natural England. This year is the first year that roads haven’t had soil runoff or ponds haven’t had algae blooms. How can we engage more strategically with United Utilities Water? We want to engage better with you, creatively and long term.” Major user
- “There needs to be more of a focus on strategic surface water management in collaboration with local authorities, with a focus on local planning as a key mechanism to deliver this. For example, local planning authorities can reserve land for future natural flood-management schemes, which will play a key role in this solution. However, the challenge here will lie in marrying all of the timescales up.

Therefore, I would advocate for maximising the opportunities of what can be done now.” Local authority flood risk officer

6. How much does your organisation consider surface water management?

- “I know we’re concentrating on fluvial load and the legacy of combined systems. We know we have acute problems when you look at where that separation might occur. Upstream solutions to reduce that surface water load has got to be the way forward. Surface water management is where you have combined systems and surface water run-off contributing to that load. You can separate it, but it will be expensive and involve digging up roads, so other ways to do that include upstream nature-based solutions to get the storage and reduce some of that runoff to give you more capacity. From my point of view, the key challenges are how the water companies get that into their plan, and I know Johnny Phillips (Surface Water Strategy Development Manager at United Utilities Water) is working on this at the moment. From an Environment Agency perspective, when we focus on fluvial risk, we then identify additional risks around sewage and surface water. Business planning timescales seem to fall down there.” Environment Agency
- “I work for the Environment Agency on the water quality side, so I work on the Water Framework Directive, but on the water improvement plan with the Environment Agency. Historically, in terms of the work we’ve done with United Utilities Water around combined sewer overflows, our approach has been around infrastructure provision, storage, treating more at treatment works, and creating better infrastructure as opposed to where we need to look now – which is around how we deal with surface water further up the catchment. Can we try and get the (relatively) cleaner water out of the system? We need to move away from hard engineering solutions and look to at-source solutions. That’s where the challenge is.” Environment Agency

SESSION 3: THE PREFERRED PLAN

The third presentation outlined U UW's three planning objectives, as well as their respective metrics and the mechanisms addressing them. Stakeholders were then shown U UW's Decision Support Tool, used to establish options for the Preferred Plan by taking into account best value, lowest whole-life cost, stakeholder consultation, and U UW's statutory obligations. A pie chart was then presented, which showed the distribution of over £3.6 billion of investment over 25 years; a large proportion of this investment (80%) was dedicated to new assets, driven by likely statutory requirements through WINEP.

Aside from this investment, the remainder was dedicated to upstream management (8%), refurbishment (4.45%) and further such investments, detailed in Figure 10. The geographical distribution of investment by option type was showcased, before stakeholders returned to breakout rooms to discuss the Preferred Plan, and a round of electronic voting was held before the wrap-up.

Stakeholders in the discussion spoke positively about U UW trying to fit everything into one set of documents as part of a complex and long-term plan. A local authority flood risk officer requested a breakdown of key information, and an Environment Agency representative queried how people would be continuously involved in the plan and the plan's review cycle. Questions were also raised regarding monitoring and reporting.

Stakeholders were broadly comfortable with how the plan had been prepared. An Environment Agency representative appreciated that the Preferred Plan was a first iteration that would be developed with partners in the coming years. U UW was praised for its work on the Preferred Plan, and was encouraged to engage with groups that may have been missed so far, such as the farming community in areas like Cumbria. The company was also praised for using online engagement to widen participation. A combined local authority representative queried how much scope there was to change the Preferred Plan through co-design and consultation. There was also interest in future consultation timescales. It was observed that the regulatory landscape could change in future, one major user suggesting that the government may be forced to move the goalposts for U UW and its counterparts over time and require the plan to become more ambitious.

When asked whether anything else should have been included within the Preferred Plan, stakeholders queried the 0.43% figure for catchment management, arguing that it should be higher. A Rivers Trust representative spoke highly of the benefits of catchment-based solutions, especially as catchment management groups were considered an effective route for engagement. A National Park Authority representative acknowledged the difficulty of presenting the breakdown of investment, and called for a greater sense of planned investment on a geographical basis for the sake of granularity.

Improvements to watercourses to mitigate the flood risk from assets were identified as a key area of focus. A Rivers Trust representative called for clarity on what improving watercourses actually meant. One stakeholder queried the extent to which U UW had engaged with farmers on protecting watercourses.

An Environment Agency participant argued for greater integration in urban centres for dealing with surface water. A local authority director emphasised that problems on catchments went beyond water pollution control. Given the evolving nature of the wider picture towards 2050, a flexible approach was encouraged. The difficulty of engaging with marginalised groups was acknowledged, and U UW was praised by an Environment Agency participant for its engagement, considering timescales. Citing issues at Lake Windermere, an environmental organisation participant questioned whether U UW was tracking visitor numbers to the area and adjusting the approach to infrastructure accordingly. An Environment Agency stakeholder felt that community flood resilience should be included.

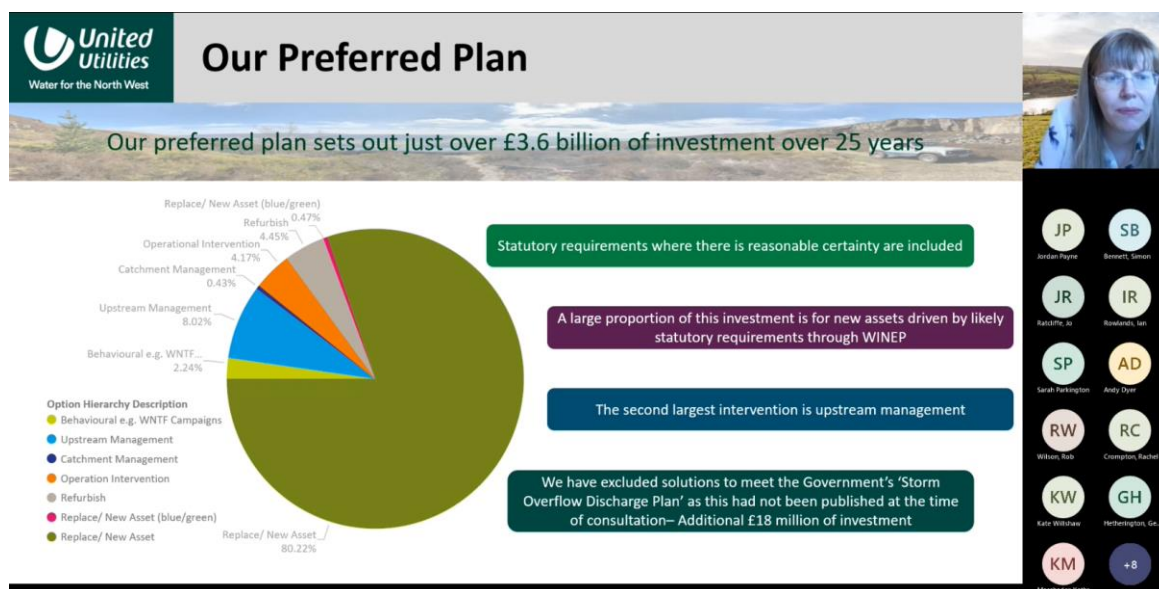


Figure 10: The draft DWMP Preferred Plan

An Environment Agency stakeholder asked whether more could be done around tackling water at source. Stakeholders requested more detail on the £3.6 billion figure and queried whether the aim was environmental improvement. An Environment Agency representative suggested that more focus should be placed on the 'replace/new asset (blue/green)'. A local authority flood risk officer felt that U UW were moving in the right direction, but believed that not covering infiltration was an issue considering the scale of this problem in the North West.

On opportunities for organisations to undertake long-term planning, an Environment Agency participant commented that flood risk management plans were one example of a number of complex long-term projects which presented opportunities. Conversely, a local authority representative believed that there were few opportunities owing to the speed of developments and the short-term nature of the plans. On reducing demand, one Rivers Trust participant made the point that they were working on a number of different programmes that incorporate nature-based solutions and biodiversity improvements. One example of this involved working to upscale the Natural Flood Management (NFM) programme in Keswick. The Rivers Trust was looking to improve biodiversity and help natural drainage systems through NFM bonds.

One Rivers Trust participant believed that the DWMP gave useful insight into future pressures and opportunities and helped with stakeholders' planning process. They requested more information about the different mechanisms for their catchment and the ramifications at a regional level.

Following the discussion, stakeholders were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement "The DWMP gives useful insight into pressures and opportunities in the future and help with your planning processes." (Figure 11). A slight majority (56%) of attendees agreed with the statement, though it should be noted that none agreed strongly. Only 13% disagreed, strongly or otherwise. 31% felt neutrally on the statement, while six stakeholders opted out of answering the question entirely.

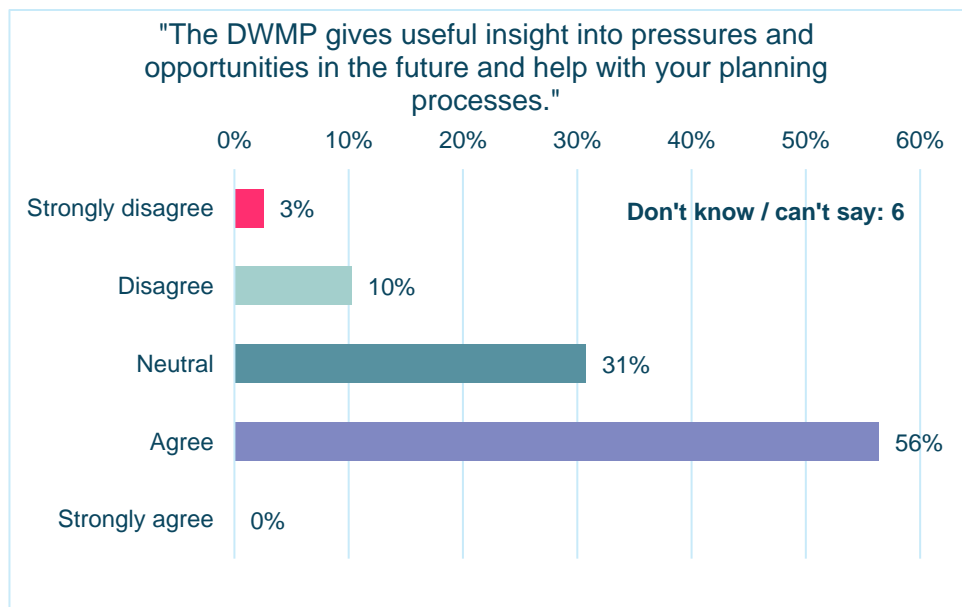


Figure 11: To what extent stakeholders feel the DWMP gives useful insight into pressures and opportunities in the future and help with your planning processes

FEEDBACK

1. Is there anything else you think we should have included within the Preferred Plan?

- "Refurbing an asset for one issue is addressing one issue rather than getting multiple benefits from catchment-based solutions." Environment Agency
- "Should actual catchment management be larger than 0.43? It depends on how you are presenting things. With this, as it's not shown geographically, we do not know how much will come into the park. A better understanding of planned investment for the next 25 years on a geographical basis would be welcome. It would help to have more granularity on your intentions." National Park Authority
- "Looking at this from a local authority perspective, there are completely different issues in rural and urban areas. Strategy is important. UUW have recently announced an important strategy for drainage. With all the housing being built because of government guidelines, there is a challenge of where to put flood management interventions. I understand that UUW wants to divide combined water from surface water systems into watercourses. If a very large amount of water is diverted from drainage systems into open watercourses, this would increase flood risk. The pie chart shows no intention to fund improvements to watercourses to mitigate the flood risk from that asset. Increased water equals

additional flood risk to residents and businesses. It goes against what flood risk management is all about. You should commit to investing in flood risk management elements for watercourses. This comes under collaboration, working together and relationships. Transferring assets back to local authorities will affect authorities in the National Park Authority.” Local authority flood risk officer

- “We need to be clear about what improving watercourses means.” Rivers Trust
- “I wonder where the farming community fits with all that. Farmers are highly valued members of our community. We’re working with them on one really big programme at the moment and hopefully more in the future. We are looking at natural flood management interventions with farmers to protect watercourses. I wonder how this fits in with U UW’s Preferred Plan.” Rivers Trust
- “I feel there needs to be greater integration in urban centres for dealing with surface water. I’ve seen very good integrated drainage systems across the continent and funding is being made available for investment into town centres in particular. There are surface water issues all over Sefton.” Environment Agency; U UW: *“We have tried to incorporate upstream management in rural and urban settings. There are challenging barriers in the urban environment that make this difficult. The logistics of dealing with such a large number of stakeholders in a small area are difficult, but we are working on a separate large-scale programme addressing this.”*
- “It’s lovely to be able to say that we should be spending money on other environmental things, but U UW has a remit and has money raised to get things done. I’d like to see more outputs, but we have to look for a balance.” Combined local authority
- “I haven’t found any gaps as things stand. I’ll say so in our formal response. I’m reassured that the message is embedded across all the documents. It’s a first stab and it’s trying to cover all of these complex issues. It’s a strategy, not a detailed action plan. I’m sure that with goodwill on all parts, we’ll be able to refine and develop those actions over the next 20 years.” Local authority flood risk officer
- “How are we defining some of these titles? In terms of the process as a whole, the conversation around joining things up and being able to see the thread of ‘you said, we did’ would be useful. Joining up different planning processes is important. I know we’ve tried to join up some United Utilities Water planning processes, but line-of-sight stuff would be good. Across the different planning documents, I’d like to see the read-across.” Environment Agency
- “Community flood resilience should definitely be part of this.” Environment Agency

2. Are you comfortable with how we have developed the Preferred Plan?

- “You have acknowledged that this is a first iteration, and we will have more conversations going forward. The way to maximise partnership opportunities is to keep talking.” Environment Agency
- “It’s been an excellent performance by U UW to do what you have done. But like with anything, there may have been people you won’t have been able to pick up. Some won’t have been involved or included. There perhaps could have been a little bit more involvement with local stakeholders in the Cumbria area. It didn’t work as well as it did in Lancashire for example. There will be communities, such as the

farming community, with their own views. UUW have done quite well given the timescales.” Environment Agency

- “How will people be continuously involved in the DWMP? What happens next? Is there a plan for how the Plan will continuously evolve?” Environment Agency; UUW: *“This is the first time we’ve done this. We envisage looking at long-term opportunities and this will probably be something of a baton pass with catchment management and asset management colleagues. This is a draft that will be constantly revised as we learn about challenges and opportunities as they arise.”*
- “I was wondering about how much scope there is to change the Preferred Plan. That feels a bit like you’re telling us what’s in it, rather than it being a process informed by co-design and consultation.” Combined local authority
- “Where did the figure of £3.6 billion over 25 years come from? It sounds like a lot of money but it’s only 144 million pounds a year. You had profits of about £600 million last year. Is the investment you are proposing going to improve the environment or just maintain it? You’ve also got Dynamic Network Management going on in the background.” Local authority flood risk officer
- “Yes. I’m still not sure we’ve nailed the partnership approach, but this is the first iteration and there are chances to have further conversations as we go forward. That’s the best we can expect. Our plan is a 6-7-year plan, and we are trying to mirror different plans. The only way to maximise the opportunities is to keep talking.” Environment Agency
- “If you’re going into cycle 2 and starting up stakeholder engagement, it would be useful for you to go through when you want us as stakeholders to comment on and provide timescales for that involvement. We get consulted on a lot of different things and we have stuff going on internally. We’d really like to interact with it but obviously we need to put some internal resource aside to do so. A heads-up ahead of any engagement would be good.” Local authority flood risk officer
- “I’m not really sure to be honest. Why is the ‘replace/new asset (blue/green)’ chunk of the pie chart so small? To me, this is all about civil engineering and infrastructure and is something that we really need here. As I said earlier, ‘replace/new asset (blue/green)’ can’t cover everything, but it needs to play a big role. I’m surprised at how much money has been allocated towards the standard “replace/new asset” grey solutions by contrast.” Environment Agency
- “You’re moving in the right direction, but I feel that you have not covered infiltration, which is a big problem in the North West. If you can reduce that, you can maybe reduce the work that your treatment plants need to do.” Local authority flood risk officer
- “The content of the plan is absolutely fine, but the devil will be in the detail, particularly how you intend to deliver it in partnership with others. We need joined up-processes and better alignment not just in your plan, but in all plans. However, overall, there doesn’t seem to be a glaring issue in terms of missing items.” Local authority director

3. The DWMP process plans to 2050; where are the opportunities for your organisation to do long-term planning?

- “We have so many long-term complex projects, so there are definitely opportunities available on that. For example, we have flood risk management plans for the next six years and we have worked with United Utilities Water on developing those. As part of these projects, we’re trying to reduce flood risk to properties while delivering additional benefits, such as biodiversity and carbon neutrality. However, we need to deliver these as part of partnerships so that local communities can enjoy the additional benefits.” Environment Agency
- “There aren’t many opportunities, I think, due to the speed of developments and the short-term nature of the plans of relevant stakeholders. For example, Greater Manchester is looking to achieve Net Zero by 2028, and that’s as far ahead as many are willing to look. 2050 is a massive planning window and so much will change on the road towards that. We personally are updating our flood management plan and we will be working with you in order to embed your strategy into our objectives, but that will only run for five years.” Local authority director

4. How could your organisation help us to reduce demand?

- “It’s not specifically my area. I did work in water resources years ago, but I think my knowledge is a bit outdated.” Environment Agency
- “We’re working on a number of different programmes that incorporate nature-based solutions and biodiversity across the catchment. For example, we’re working to upscale the NFM programme in Keswick and are looking to improve biodiversity and help natural drainage systems through NFM bonds.” Rivers Trust

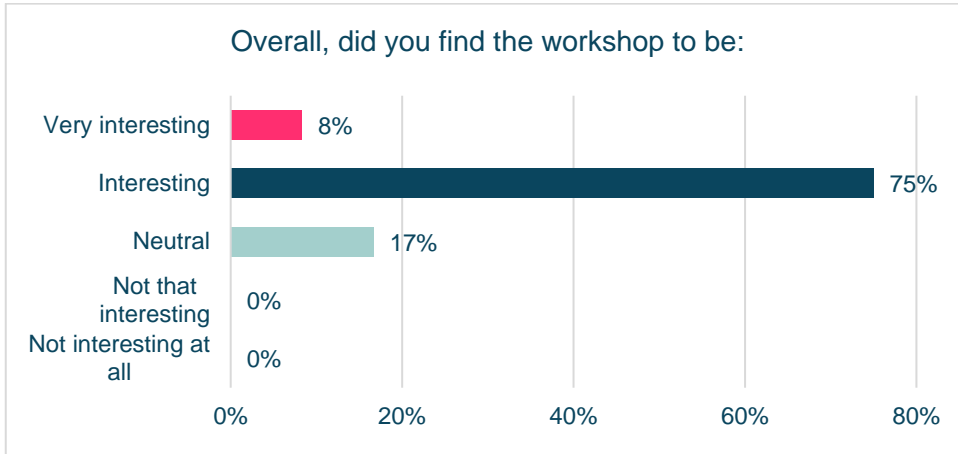
5. Does the DWMP give useful insight into future pressures and opportunities and help with your planning processes?

- “I think that for us, it’s fine, but it would be good to have a bit more information about the different mechanisms for our catchment and the ramifications at a regional level. That would be useful for us.” Rivers Trust

APPENDIX I: WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

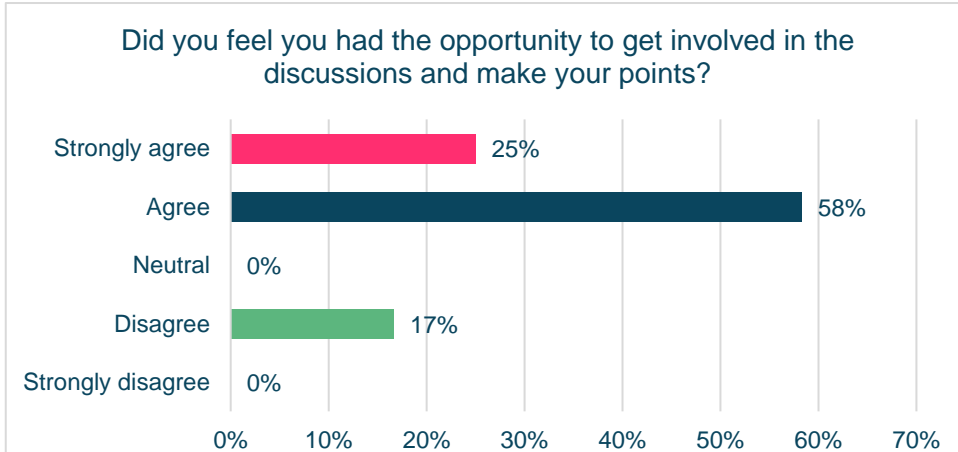
After the workshop, stakeholders were asked to complete a short feedback form. Stakeholders were also asked to leave a comment, should they wish, explaining their reasoning for each response. These comments are noted under the headings 'Comments'. Some of the key findings are shown below.

Overall, did you find this workshop to be:



Appendix 1: To what extent stakeholders found the workshops to be interesting

Did you feel you had the opportunity to get involved in the discussions and make your points?

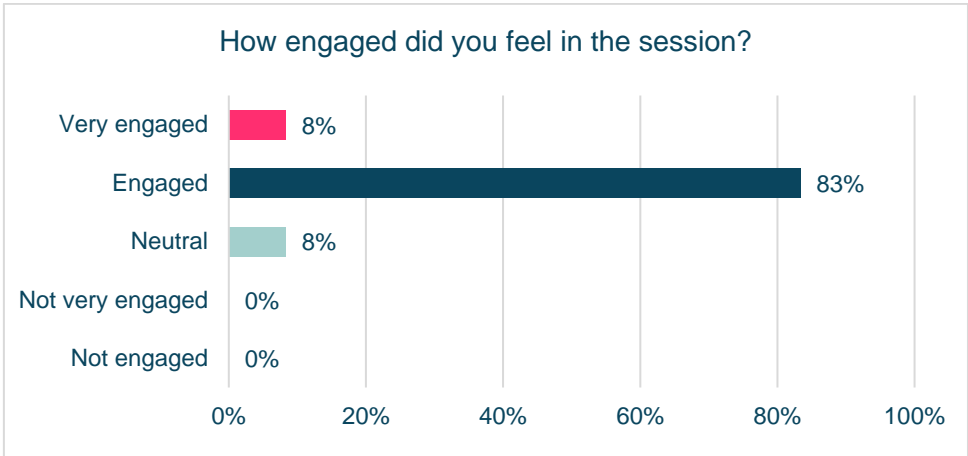


Appendix 2: To what extent stakeholders felt they had the opportunity to get involved in the discussions and make their points

Comments:

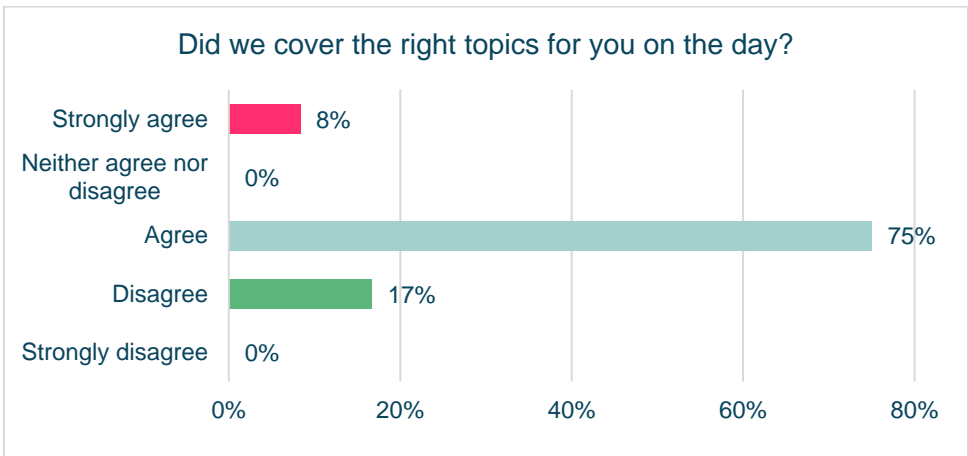
- "Active contribution with colleagues."

How engaged did you feel in the session?



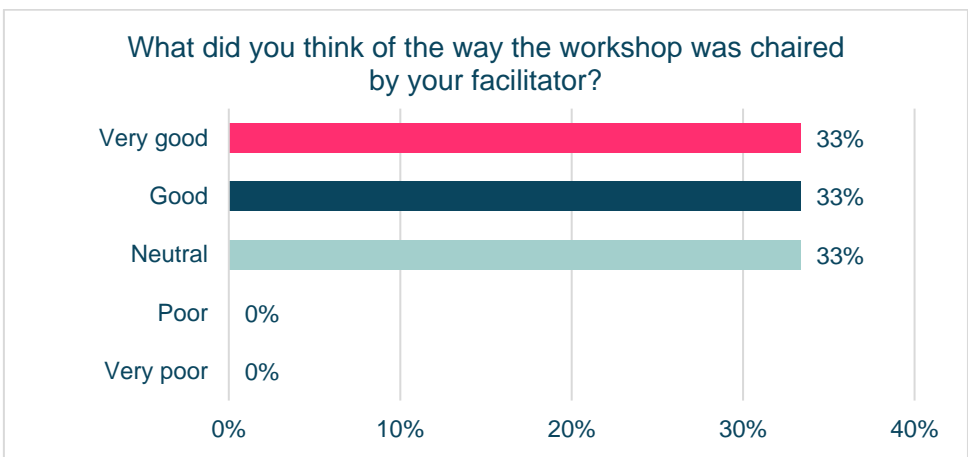
Appendix 3: To what extent stakeholders felt they were engaged in the session

Did we cover the right topics for you on the day?



Appendix 4: To what extent stakeholders felt the right topics were covered on the day.

What did you think of the way the workshop was chaired by your facilitator?



Appendix 5: How well stakeholders felt the workshop was chaired by their facilitator.

Comments:

- “[The facilitator] Kept it moving and on point.”

-
- “[They] also took comments from hands up and did also once these contributors had spoken ask others who hadn't contributed for input in the last session.”

Any other comments stakeholders had relating to the workshop:

- “Haven't had a chance to fully absorb the plan yet so comments based on partial knowledge – timing of the workshop is helpful as a reminder to go back and have a proper read and give feedback. Lots of the questions/discussions in the breakout sessions were about process followed to get to this point re the plan. It would be helpful to have a covering ‘you said we did’ doc that takes us from draft to final plan that includes some of the changes in wider water management government drivers between the draft and now.”
- “Early notice of these multi-county consultations would help us to address capacity constraints to some degree and coordinate Wildlife Trusts' responses or agree a single response.”
- “Worthwhile, useful overview. Will need to firm up wider council response via functional/corporate leads.”

APPENDIX ii: ATTENDEES

There were a total of 67 attendees from 40 different organisations at the workshops; the organisations are shown below.

- ACTion with Communities in Cumbria
- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackpool Council
- Carlisle City Council
- Cheshire East Council
- Copeland Borough Council
- Cumbria County Council
- Cumbria Tourism
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Eden Rivers Trust
- Environment Agency
- Friends of the Lake District
- Fylde Council
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Halton Borough Council
- Holker Estates
- Lake District National Park Authority
- Lancashire County Council
- Mersey Rivers Trust
- Moors for the Future Partnership
- National Flood Forum
- Natural England
- Nature Connected
- Ribble Rivers Trust
- Rochdale Borough Council
- RSPB
- Sefton Council
- Stormwater Shepherds UK
- Tatton Group
- The Environment Agency, Cumbria & Lancashire Area
- The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside
- Transport For Greater Manchester
- Warrington Borough Council
- West Cumbria Rivers Trust
- West Lancashire Borough Council
- Wigan Council
- Wirral Council
- Wyre Rivers Trust
- YourVoice



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