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**WATER FORUMS  
CHAIR  
CANDIDATE PACK**

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**the  
water  
forums**

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# MESSAGE FROM HEIDI MOTTRAM

I am delighted that you are interested in Chairing our Water Forums.

At Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL), our aim is to provide excellent customer service and to be the national leader in the provision of sustainable water and wastewater services. Our values - customer focused, results driven, ethical, creative, and one team - drive everything we do. They underpin our strong relationships and our unrivalled customer service culture.

We will achieve our aims by working in partnership with our customers and stakeholders. Central to this is the advice and challenge from our expert independent Customer Challenge Groups (CCGs) which we call the Water Forums. The chance to lead such an influential CCG is an opportunity that is rarely seen.

The Water Forums Nominations Committee, which is a formal sub-group charged by members to appoint their Chair, has prepared this briefing pack to give you an insight into the wider context of the Water Forums work, and members expectations of the Chair role.

Good luck with your application.



**Heidi Mottram**  
Chief Executive Officer



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# BACKGROUND TO THE WATER FORUMS

All water companies have their own 'Customer Challenge Group', albeit with different names to ours.

We are the CCGs for NWL and cover its two operating areas, Northumbrian Water (NW) and Essex & Suffolk Water (ESW). We are a fiercely independent and balanced blend of industry regulators, subject experts and independent members who have wholeheartedly risen to the job at hand.

Our job isn't to run the company or to make decisions (that's for the Board and the Executive Leadership Team to do); it's to champion on behalf of customers and challenge the company to understand the impact of decisions before they're taken. Our challenges are always from a very early starting point - we challenge the company during business planning and as it delivers its plans.

## CHALLENGING THE COMPANY DURING BUSINESS PLANNING

The England and Wales water industry is just coming to the end of its 2020 to 2025 planning and price-setting process, known as Periodic Review 2019 (PR19). Its regulator, Ofwat, raised the bar for this review in two very important areas: the amount and quality of customer engagement in the process, and the degree of independent challenge from companies' CCGs. This ensures water companies pricing proposals reflect their customers' views and priorities.

Over the past three years we have challenged the company to create a business plan that is as grounded as much as possible in excellent customer engagement, provides stretch in its targets, is affordable for customers, and helps those who are struggling to pay their bills. Our report to Ofwat can be found [here](#) and the company business plan can be found [here](#).

We will continue to take an active part as this process comes to an end in January 2020, and plan how we can improve the way we work for the 2024 review (PR24).

## CHALLENGING THE COMPANY'S ANNUAL PERFORMANCE

We monitor the company's performance through its updates at our quarterly main meetings, and its 'Annual Performance Report'. We also review its environmental and social contribution through the 'Our Contribution' report. We combine these updates and reports with deep-dives into areas that are important to customers, such as leakage. We can then challenge the company strongly and knowledgeably. We are also used as a sounding board on innovative projects, such as environmental partnerships – therefore we are very often involved at the inception of the company's plans.

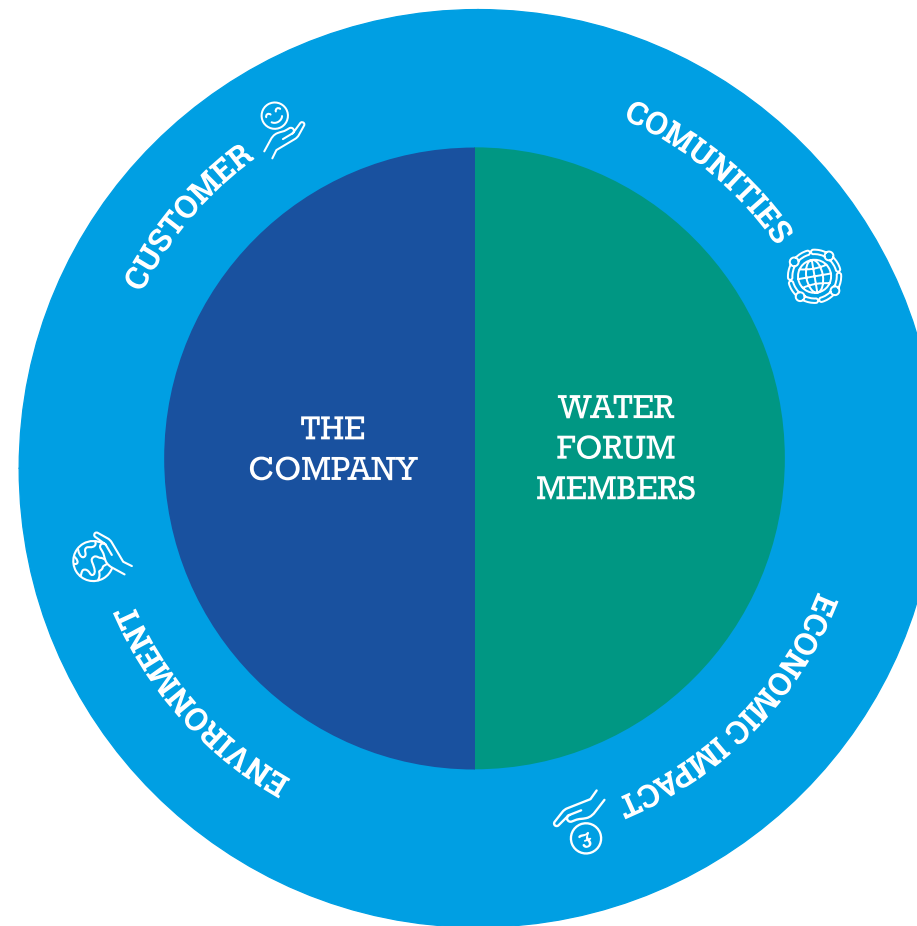
We report on many of these things to Ofwat within our statement in the company's Annual Performance Report.

## THE WAY WE WORK

We recognise the important role the company plays in people's lives. NW provides water and wastewater services to 2.7 million people and ESW provides water only services to 1.8 million people. Therefore, to monitor and challenge the company's planning and performance as it delivers its services to customers, we need to both prioritise on key topics, and then divide and conquer our work areas. We do this by using our members as individual experts, as members in sub-groups and also work as one joint Forums team (NW and ESW).

### THE COMPANY:

- 1 Informs
- 2 Consults
- 3 Involves
- 4 Participates
- 5 Empowers
- 6 Accepts challenge
- 7 Changes



### MEMBERS:

- 1 Challenge
- 2 Review
- 3 Network
- 4 Provide assurance
- 5 Influence
- 6 Participate
- 7 Support

**WE ALL AIM TO BE CONTINUOUSLY VIGILANT, INDEPENDENT AND TRANSPARENT, EXPERT AND BROAD, ACTIVE AND ENGAGING, CHALLENGING, PROVIDING ASSURANCE, FOCUSED AND TO HAVE A PROFESSIONAL BOARD RELATIONSHIP.**

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# THE CHAIR, THE PERSON AND THE COMMITMENT

## THE ROLE

### JOB TITLE: CHAIR OF NORTHUMBRIAN AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER FORUMS

Purpose of job – to work with the vice-chairs to lead the Water Forums as they carry out their role. To enable and support members as they scrutinise whether the company's strategy and business plans reflect the views of both customers and stakeholders, and whether the company is delivering on its performance commitments.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leading and continuously improving the Forums

The Chair will:

- maintain the Water Forums independence;
- shape how the Water Forums interact with the company through to the conclusion of the next price review in 2025 (PR24);
- appoint vice-chairs to appropriately cover the operating areas (ie NW and ESW);
- build and maintain membership;
- facilitate meetings, taking an independent viewpoint and encouraging member organisations to work together;
- continually build and maintain good relationships with Water Forum members, company representatives, company Board and regulators; and
- act as spokesperson, clearly articulating the purpose and work of the Water Forums.

## THE PERSON

Chairing skills and experience

Chair candidates must be able to demonstrate:

- the ability to lead groups that hold a wide range of expertise;
- experience of influencing and challenging partners at all levels;
- excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to develop a strong two-way relationships with stakeholders;
- experience of listening, reflecting and representing customers views; and
- the ability to speak confidently in public and to the media.

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## **OTHER COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS**

The Chair will be able to earn the respect of Water Forum members, Ofwat, the company Board and its Executive Leadership Team, and will have extensive knowledge of governance and assurance matters. The candidate will give proportionate assurance to the company's regulator, Ofwat, on how the company has delivered against its performance commitments and the effectiveness of the company's engagement programme with its customers and stakeholders.

The Chair will be comfortable acting as a spokesperson, taking an independent, ethical and fair viewpoint, and encouraging member organisations to work together to achieve the best outcomes for customers.

## **THE COMMITMENT**

We are seeking a flexible commitment of between four to six main meetings per year (as required in Essex & Suffolk or Northumbrian operating regions or centrally based, eg Peterborough). This will increase to about eight main meetings in 2023 – while the Water Forums Report to Ofwat is developed and finalised.

We also expect the Chair to be active outside of our meetings in both operating regions, to meet and work with members and the company to plan Water Forum activities and agendas, to meet new members, to take part in customer and stakeholder events and to facilitate the Water Forums engagement with Ofwat (eg at its CCG Chairs meetings).

## **REMUNERATION**

The Chair will be remunerated at a fixed-rate of £20,000 per annum. This is based on an overall average of two days per month, however the actual working pattern will vary, over the year and over the five-year regulatory cycle, with some intense periods of working nearing the submission of the business plan in year four. A pragmatic and flexible approach to time management will be needed.

## **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

The Water Forums Nominations Committee will subject the Chair to an Annual Performance Review.

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## MORE INFORMATION

More information can be found at the following sites:

### OFWAT'S INFORMATION ON CUSTOMER CHALLENGE GROUPS

<https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/regulated-companies/price-review/2019-price-review/customer-challenge-groups/>

### NORTHUMBRIAN AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER FORUMS

[www.nwl.co.uk/your-home/The-water-forum.aspx](http://www.nwl.co.uk/your-home/The-water-forum.aspx)

[www.eswater.co.uk/your-home/The-water-forum.aspx](http://www.eswater.co.uk/your-home/The-water-forum.aspx)

### NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER:

[www.nwgourplan.co.uk/](http://www.nwgourplan.co.uk/)

[www.nwl.co.uk/](http://www.nwl.co.uk/)

[www.eswater.co.uk](http://www.eswater.co.uk)

[www.welivewater.co.uk/](http://www.welivewater.co.uk/)

The logo for 'the water forums' is displayed within a white speech bubble shape. The text 'the' is in a smaller, lowercase font, 'water' is in a larger, lowercase font, and 'forums' is in the same large, lowercase font as 'water'. All text is in a dark blue color.

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