

RWG Water Efficiency Subgroup Meeting minutes – 18.09.25

Name of group: Water Efficiency

Meeting number: 6

Time and date: 18 September 2025 09:30-11:00

Attendees

Meeting Chair: Oli Shelly (OS), Gary Beaver (GB)

Secretariat: Toks Talabi (TT), MOSL

Attendees: Jo Barnes (Anglian Water), Stan Petrov (Ofwat), Alison Turner (Anglian Water), Mike Gray (Castle Water), Liz D'Arcy (MOSL), Aimee Shaw (Wessex Water), Tim Wagstaff (Northumbrian), Rachel Dyson (Waterwise), David Morris (Water plus), Andrew Tucker (Thameswater), Peter Strain (Castle Water), Kayleigh Sharman (Southern Water), Eleanor Pendel (Water Scan), Liz Cairns (environment-agency, Francesca Pumilia (Affinity), Michelle Marvel (Southeast Water), Paul Baker (business stream), Gordon Barclay (seswater), Alice Denholm (uuplc), Emma McCabe (uuplc)

Apologies: Becky Pointer (Affinity), Jo Osborn (Waterwise), Nick Butt (Conservaqua), Aiken Besley (EA), Jessica Wyatt (Waterscan)

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1.	Welcome, Meeting Focus	<p>OS welcomed everyone to the Water Efficiency subgroup meeting. Apologies were noted from BP, JO, NB, AB and JW.</p> <p>Focus for meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WE Group Retailer Chair vacancy • Water Efficiency Incentives Study update • Open discussion of the study and RWG's covering letter and next steps
2.	WE Group Retailer Chair vacancy	<p>OS announced that he would be stepping down as chair at the end of October and outlined the arrangements to ensure a seamless handover. The subgroup agreed to adopt a co-chair structure, comprising one representative from wholesale and one from retail. GB of Anglian Water has confirmed his willingness to serve as the wholesale chair. However, the position of retailer co-chair remains vacant. OS encouraged retailers and their colleagues to consider taking on the role, offering to discuss the associated duties and time commitment with any interested parties. GB also expressed his willingness to speak with prospective co-chairs, highlighting the advantages of collaboration between wholesale and retail leadership. OS emphasised the need for wholesale and retail leaders to ensure group effectiveness and continuity, and invited interest without commitment.</p>
3.	Water Efficiency Incentives Study update	<p>OS reminded the subgroup that a study had been commissioned with Baringa, funded by the strategic panel, to examine incentives aimed at encouraging customers to use water more efficiently, with the primary objective of motivating customer action. The initial draft of the final report was circulated for preliminary comments. The study identified eight overarching policy options, each of which was assessed in terms of its potential to reduce demand, cost-effectiveness, practicality of implementation, and regulatory considerations. AT reported on recent discussions held with Baringa to refine the executive summary, with particular focus on a principal graph that illustrates the contribution of current water resource management plans (WRMPs) towards meeting national targets, as well as demonstrating that the proposed incentives would provide additional benefits.</p> <p>The subgroup emphasised the importance of ensuring that the report's descriptions are clear, particularly in relation to business demand reduction targets, and reached consensus on</p>

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		<p>revising the wording to improve overall comprehension. OS indicated that the principal graph within the study will be amended to distinctly present the baseline effects of existing Water Resource Management Plans, with the impact of proposed incentives illustrated separately, thereby preventing any risk of double-counting or misinterpretation.</p> <p>OS noted that the report serves as an evidence base rather than a set of endorsed recommendations, with a covering letter from the water efficiency subgroup set to clarify its interpretation and application. OS advised that the next steps involve finalising the report, revising the executive summary and visuals, and drafting a group response to support industry, regulators, and policymakers. The subgroup highlighted the necessity of aligning the study’s outcomes with the water efficiency roadmap and ensuring responsibilities are clearly designated to the relevant parties.</p>
4.	Open discussion of the study and RWG's covering letter and next steps	<p>It was agreed by the group that the covering letter should make reference to the water efficiency roadmap, strongly highlighting the “imperative to act” and clearly distinguishing between mere awareness, expressions of support, and tangible customer action.</p> <p>RD proposed formulating a communications strategy or developing core messages, with the intention that organisations such as Waterwise could assist in disseminating the findings to government and regulators. Both AT and OS agreed, stressing that engagement should be carefully targeted at key stakeholders, rather than taking the form of broad public communications. The group resolved that the immediate next steps would be to finalise the report, making only minor adjustments, update both the executive summary and associated visuals, and subsequently prepare a draft response letter from the RWG. It was noted that this letter will play a pivotal role in shaping how findings are presented to policymakers and regulators, as well as supporting industry advocacy efforts.</p> <p>There was consideration of the timing, with recognition of the necessity to align communications with forthcoming legislative or regulatory developments such as possible amendments to the Water Industry Act to increase the likelihood that recommendations will be taken into account.</p>

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		<p>Additionally, the subgroup emphasised the importance of identifying the specific individuals or departments within government and regulatory agencies that should receive the findings, to maximise their influence.</p> <p>OS urged members to review the draft report thoroughly and to provide feedback, paying particular attention to clarity, technical precision, and the inclusion of actionable recommendations.</p>
5.	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TT confirmed that additional future dates will be scheduled in diaries. • The LDA has announced that the water resource planning guideline for the 2029 plans will soon be released for public consultation. Retailers are encouraged to review the document thoroughly and submit their feedback accordingly. • The LDA indicated that the water resource planning guideline for the 2029 plans will shortly be available for public consultation. Retailers are encouraged to undertake a comprehensive review of the document and to provide their feedback as appropriate. RD extended Waterwise’s support for the Ofwat consultation regarding strategies to enhance water efficiency and wholesale charges for business customers and encouraged others to share any points they wish to be reflected in Waterwise’s official response. • GB provided an update on continuous flow discussions and will present a high-level plan at the next meeting. AT suggested collaboration with Rosie Rand of Thames Water and outlined future priorities: tracking non-household consumption during droughts and enhancing data insights, supported by the group. EM stressed engaging business customers for sector-specific water use knowledge, with GB and MG citing golf course work. AT presented a draft policy for large non-domestic water applications, seeking nationwide consistency and support from the Environment Agency and government; LDA is interested in reviewing it.
5.	Date of next meeting	Thursday 16 th October 2025