



## **Introduction**

Severn Trent Water Ltd (STWL) is a regulated business with statutory responsibilities for the provision of water and sewerage services. Specifically in Wales STWL provides water and/or sewerage services to around 35,000 homes and businesses in Wales.

## **Context**

Core regulatory and business needs for STWL centre around:

- Waste Water Service provision
- Clean Water Service Provision

STWL has a rolling five year infrastructure investment programme to meet the challenges faced by the modern water and waste water industry. These challenges include new and tightened environmental and quality obligations and providing adequate infrastructure for growth. In addition to the 5 year programme, STWL uses a further 25 year planning horizon to better anticipate and manage future requirements of Water and Waste service provision. Such plans are developed in conjunction with National, Regional and Local policy provision and guidance.

## **Policies of Welsh Assembly Government**

Planning Policy Wales (3rd Edition) published in July 2010 sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Assembly Government. This revised and consolidated document provides the strategic policy framework for local planning authorities to use when preparing development plans and determining planning applications.

The main driver behind Planning Policy Wales is to further embed the need to tackle climate change into the planning system, and further ratify sustainable development as the central organising principle of the Welsh Assembly Government. As such, identifying and addressing the environmental, economic and social justice implications of climate change is at the forefront of policy in Wales and embedded in its sustainability agenda and wider key Welsh Government priorities.

The Spatial Plan for Wales: People, Places, Futures, sets a strategic framework to guide future development and policy interventions. It integrates the spatial aspects of national strategies for social inclusion and economic development,

health, transport and environment, translating the Assembly Government's sustainable development duty into practice.

## **Sustainability and STWL**

Economic and environmental sustainability are essential considerations for STWL.

Economic considerations centre around the affordability and value for money for customers of the services STWL provides, set in the context of economic regulation and stock market investment. Specifically STWL needs to manage operational and capital investment costs, energy consumption (and the correlation with environmental sustainability) with the ability to deliver timely and efficient services and maintain supply resilience.

Environmental considerations are core to our Business. Ranging from the treatment of waste water to prevent environmental pollution and improve river and groundwater quality to European standards, understanding and minimising the impact on and use of natural resources in construction and operational activities, including reducing our carbon footprint, through to the need to protect the availability and quality of water resources.

Clearly spatial planning policies directly impact upon the provision, capacity and sustainable operation of water and waste water services. STWL welcomes opportunities such as provided by the National Assembly for Wales Sustainability Committee to become engaged in the ongoing discussions and considerations around the future development of Wales.

Whilst not a statutory consultee in the development control process, STWL relies on accurate and timely information on developments to plan for the provision of infrastructure in the most cost effective way. STWL are happy to, and have worked with local authorities at an early stage in producing information to support their core strategies, namely Water Cycle Strategies and Infrastructure Delivery Plans and have previously issued advice to all local authorities on how to consider waste and water services when developing local plans.

### Water usage

STWL actively promote water efficiency and supports measures within the building regulations on water usage and sustainability. In reality many of the technologies are there to support sustainable water management and significant usage reduction, with the knock on effect of reduced cost for treatment (in economic and environmental terms) of both the clean and waste water; changing behaviors will be key.

### Renewable Energy

Operation of the STWL portfolio to supply customer needs is a major power consumer, STWL have an active renewable programme and have invested significantly to meet a target of generating 30% of our total electricity usage from renewable sources by 2015. In order to achieve this target we are investigating many opportunities to increase our renewable generation base including technologies such as solar, hydro and wind. Indeed planning permission for a number of large wind turbines across our entire region is currently being sought. The provision of sound planning policies and guidance encouraging and supporting sustainable and renewable projects is essential.

### Surface Water Management

Local authorities will shortly have new powers and responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. We will be looking to Local Authorities to help us reduce the volume of surface water in our foul and combined sewers through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems on new developments. This will ultimately reduce the need to reconstruct sewers and sewage treatment works and help keep customers' bills as low as possible. It will also help reduce pollution from combined sewer overflows, reduce flood flows in sewers and watercourses and help sustain river flows in dry weather.

The location and layout of developments is key to minimising the risk of property flooding. Sewerage and sustainable drainage systems have a finite capacity and cannot deal with surface water during extreme events. Local authorities will shortly have the responsibility to manage this surface water. Careful layout of the development can avoid the inundation of properties during these events by allowing surface water to pass safely along highways and through open spaces. We will be happy to provide advice to local authorities in our region.

### **Conclusion**

Severn Trent Water Ltd supports the recent publication of Planning for Wales (Edition 3 - July 2010) and the continued commitment to the need for adequate and efficient clean water and sewage infrastructure within Wales. Furthermore the objective of promoting the generation of energy from renewable and low carbon sources as a means to secure zero or low carbon developments and to tackle the causes of climate change accords with our own objectives as we seek to deliver our commitments through AMP5 and identify opportunities to promote opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy generation on our estates and operational land within Wales.

Planning for Wales identifies that it expects local planning authorities to develop a strategic and long term approach to infrastructure provision when preparing development plans. For waste and water services it is the ability to translate this requirement into reality and to ensure that there is effective engagement between ourselves and local planning authorities that will be critical to success of this key objective. This is important both to ensure that STWL can deliver our capital

commitments and obligations to customers but also to ensure that we have adequate understanding of the level of planned development to ensure that we can advise on the level of capacity available within the existing network.