



Ms Rachel Fletcher
Chief Executive
Ofwat
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham
B5 4UA

Your ref:
Our ref: SAB.jj
Date: 21 October 2019
Please ask for: Stephen Baker
Direct Dial: 01394 444378
Email: Stephen.baker@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

By email and post to: rachel.fletcher@ofwat.gov.uk

Dear Ms Fletcher

We write in support of Northumbrian Water Limited's proposed Business Plan for 2020-25 and their intention to invest in schemes to improve resilience with regards to water supply in the Essex and Suffolk operating area, an area that is designated as being 'water stressed'.

We welcome the fact that their Business Plan is proposing a significant bill reduction for Essex and Suffolk Water customers of more than 17%. We are also pleased to see that the company was the first to commit to eradicating water poverty in its operating area by 2030 and has invested in a national water poverty unit in partnership with National Energy Action to help to achieve this.

In the context of this commitment to ensuring bills are affordable, it is right that the company consulted its customers over whether they wanted even further bill reductions, or to see more investment in schemes to improve the resilience of water networks. Residents in our area expect the company to plan for the future, and to invest in its infrastructure in order to plan for population growth and climate change. These are significant issues for Essex and Suffolk, but we have a good track record here of working in partnership with Essex and Suffolk Water and other agencies to deliver innovative solutions.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (or neighbourhoods) in England. The figures released in September 2019 show that Suffolk has 22 of the most deprived wards in England in terms of low income, with almost 16,000 people in East Suffolk alone affected by income deprivation. We have included these figures here to demonstrate just how important it is for Essex and Suffolk Water to achieve a reduction in customer bills.

However, I understand that Essex and Suffolk Water customers, when presented with the choice of large bill reductions or investment now to reduce the risk of more serious problems happening in the future, clearly indicated the company should invest now, with 91% accepting the plan the company developed.

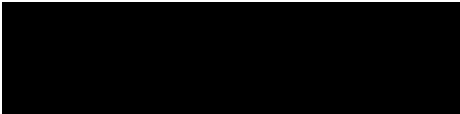
LEGAL ADDRESS East Suffolk House, Station Road, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1RT

POSTAL ADDRESS Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft NR33 0EQ

Within Suffolk, this includes investment in treated water storage and improvements to network connectivity, protecting 80,000 properties across the region from being impacted in the event of a problem affecting Barsham water treatment works' intake from the River Waveney.

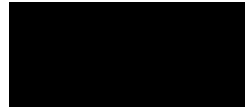
Striking the right balance between affordable bills today and investing to ensure future generations have a resilient service, is clearly an important judgment, particularly given our understanding of growing environmental pressures. Residents in Suffolk have recognised that in what they have asked Essex and Suffolk Water to deliver over the next five years, and I would urge you to support their choices by taking a long-term view and ensuring the company's plan to deliver this package of schemes is financeable as you make your determination.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Baker | Chief Executive
East Suffolk Council

Yours sincerely



Cllr Steve Gallant | Leader
East Suffolk Council