

**From:** [Gibbs Karen](#)  
**To:** [NIA2.CfE\\_Responses](#)  
**Subject:** Second National Infrastructure Assessment: Call for Evidence  
**Date:** Friday, February 4, 2022 4:33:22 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Dear NIC

The Consumer Council for Water (CCW) welcomes the publication of the Commission's Baseline Assessment and in particular the intention to carry out a dedicated study into surface water management: **Challenge 6: Surface water management – the Commission will consider actions to maximise short term opportunities and improve long term planning, funding and governance arrangements for surface water management, while protecting water from pollution from drainage.**

As the Commission rightly points out, the operation and performance of sewerage systems has been a cause of growing concern in recent years. The improvement in monitoring arrangements is only now revealing the true extent of the spills from storm overflows. CCW's own customer research supports the Commission's social research findings, that consumers care greatly about their environment and expect their utility providers to do the same. Sewerage companies will need to work hard to rebuild the trust of their customers in relation to river and bathing water quality. The outcome of the investigations by Ofwat and the Environment Agency announced at the end of last year will therefore be keenly awaited. As the Commission will be aware, the new Strategic Policy Statement (SPS), formally laid in Parliament on 2 February 2022, sets out the government's expectations that Ofwat and water companies will prioritise action to protect and enhance the environment, and deliver a resilient and sustainable water supply. In particular, it confirms government expectations of water companies to significantly reduce the frequency and volume of sewage discharges from storm overflows. It also urges Ofwat to challenge the companies to show how they will be more ambitious in protecting the environment, whilst also getting the basics right. Any future strategy must therefore ensure that peoples' homes, businesses and local communities are also protected from the misery of sewer flooding. CCW is campaigning on this issue and therefore welcomed the Commission's commitment that the study will "determine the improvements needed to England's drainage systems to manage and mitigate surface water flooding in urban and rural areas, both now and in the future. It will assess current approaches to manage surface water and consider which options provide the greatest resilience and value for money."

We recognise that making our sewerage systems fit for the future is likely to require significant investment. CCW has, at the request of Defra and Welsh Government recently concluded an Affordability Review for the water sector and in so doing has identified a number of proposals that would ensure that the most financially vulnerable water customers are given the support they need to take them out of water poverty. We believe that by having an appropriate package of support in place for those least able to pay, the generality of customers would be more likely to support investment in making these services more resilient, and in protecting and enhancing the environment.

We would welcome an opportunity to share more details with you in due course.

Regards

Karen

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