

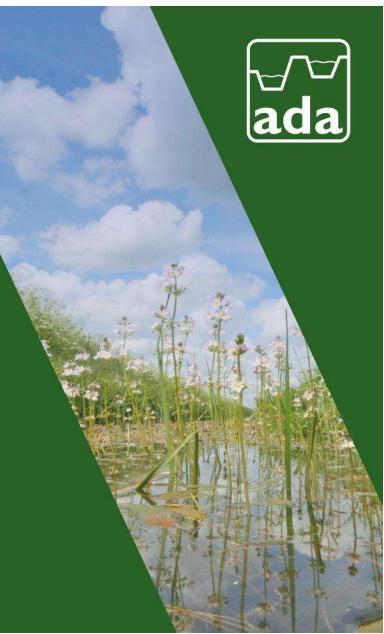


**ENVIRONMENT
DAY 2026**



RAINWATER HARVESTING
Matt Wheeldon
Director of Infrastructure Development
Wessex Water

SPONSORED BY



PARK FARM

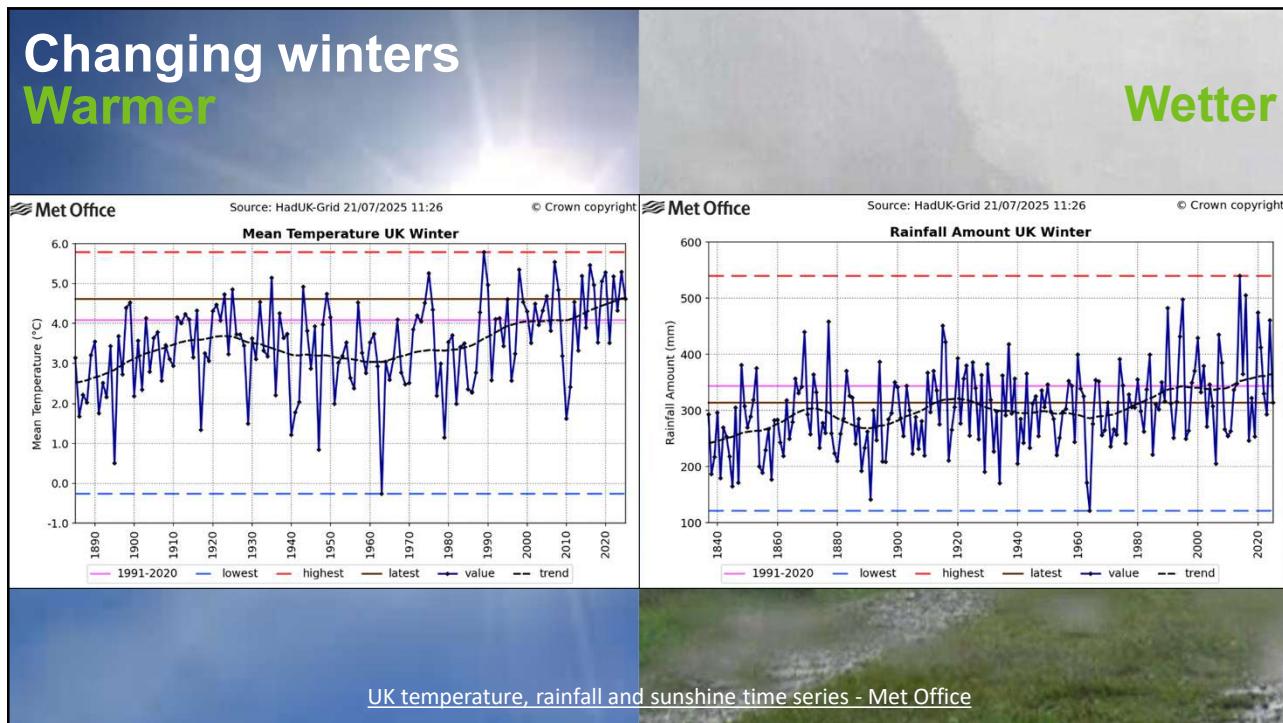
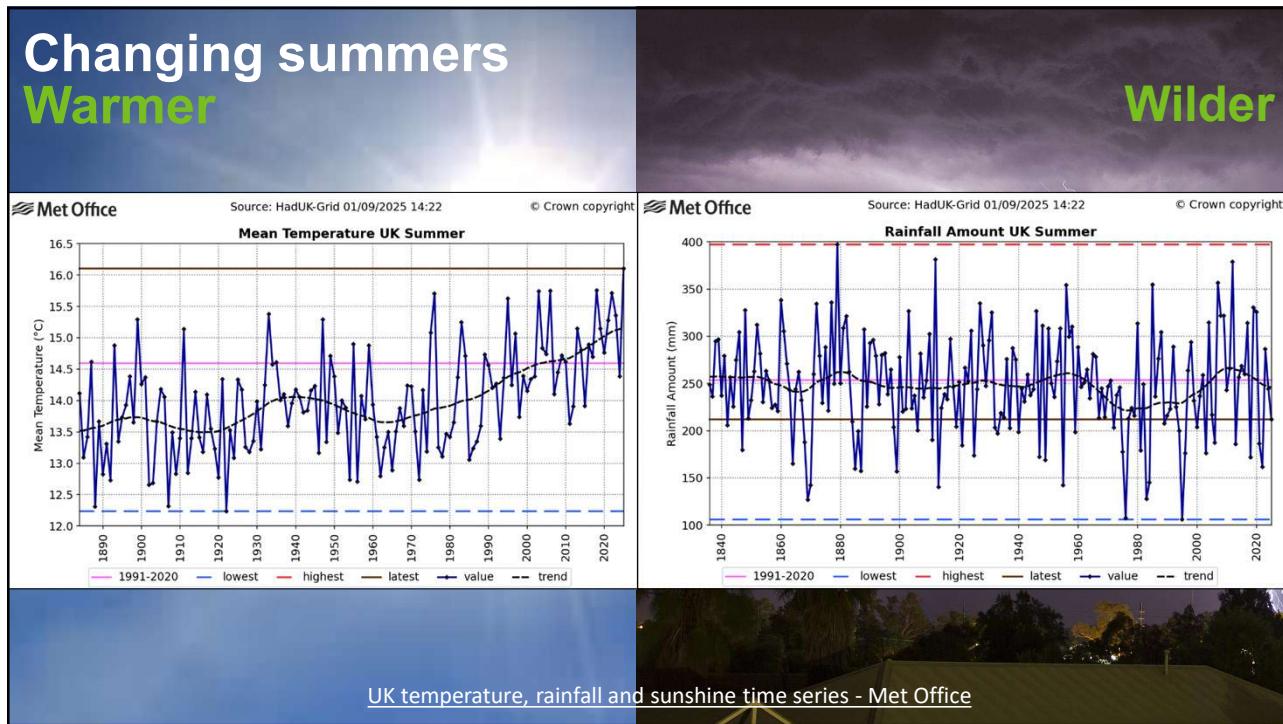


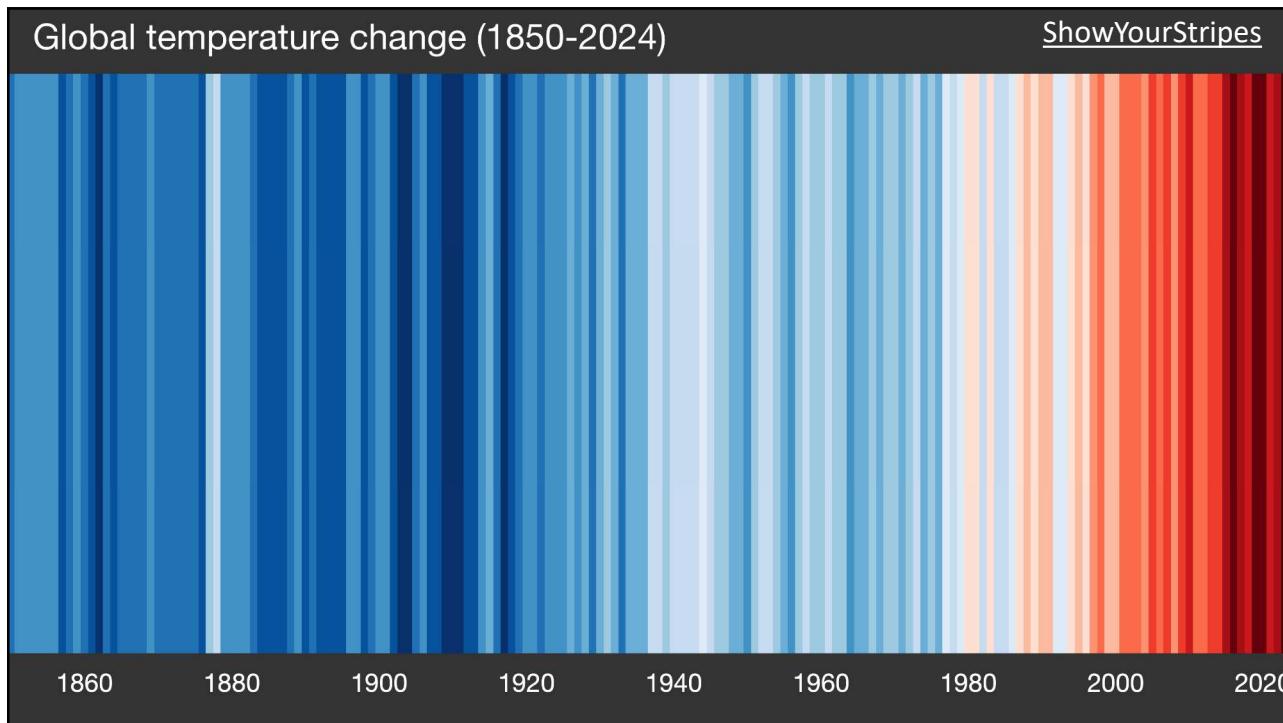
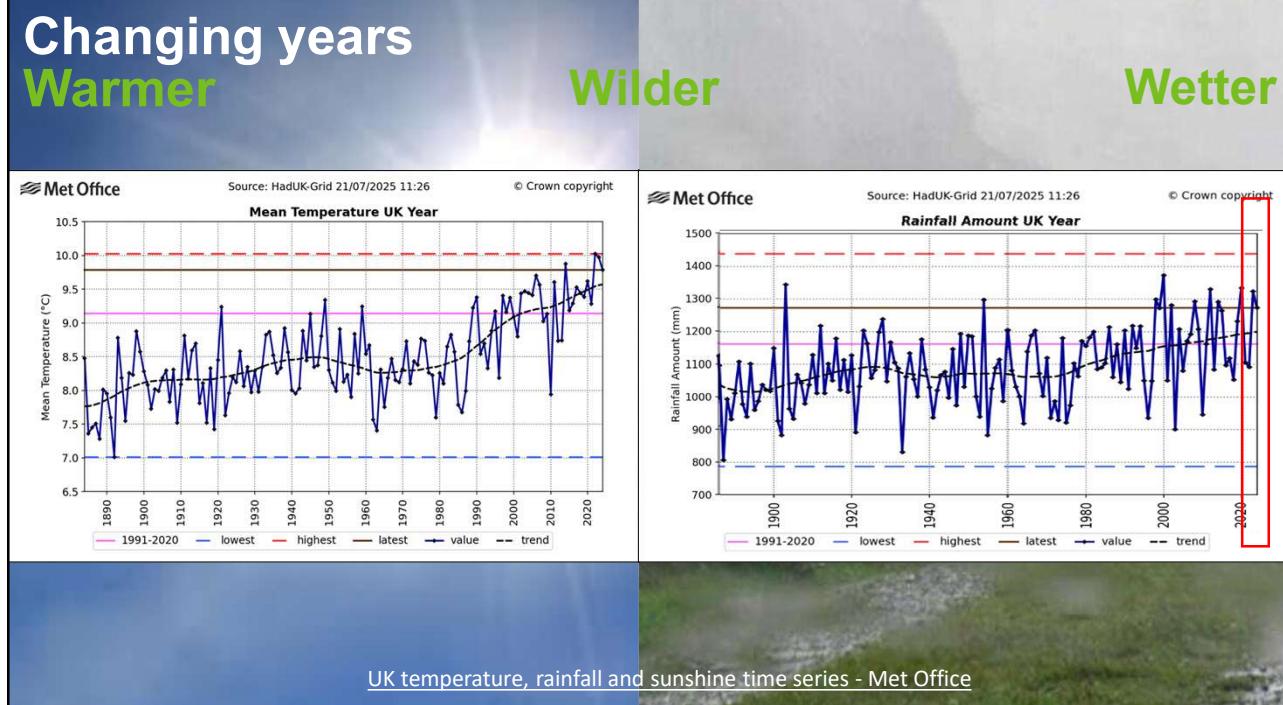
**Managing rain better
where it lands**
Why and how?

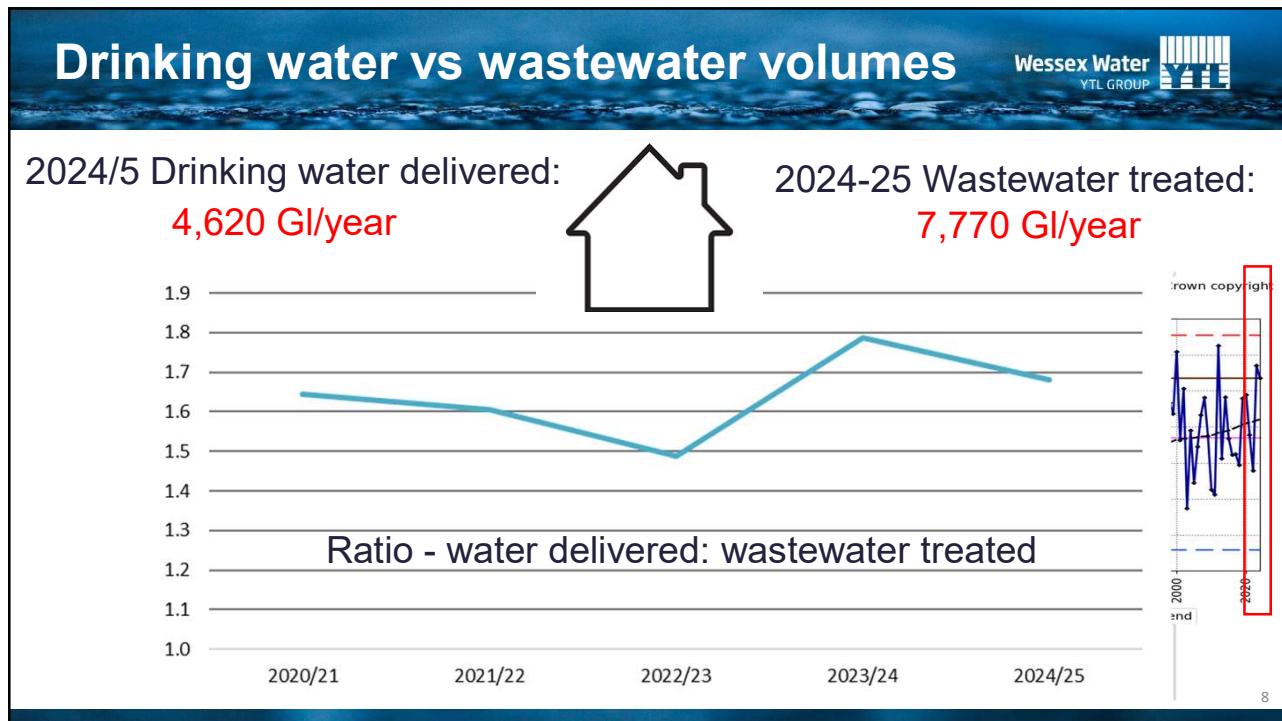
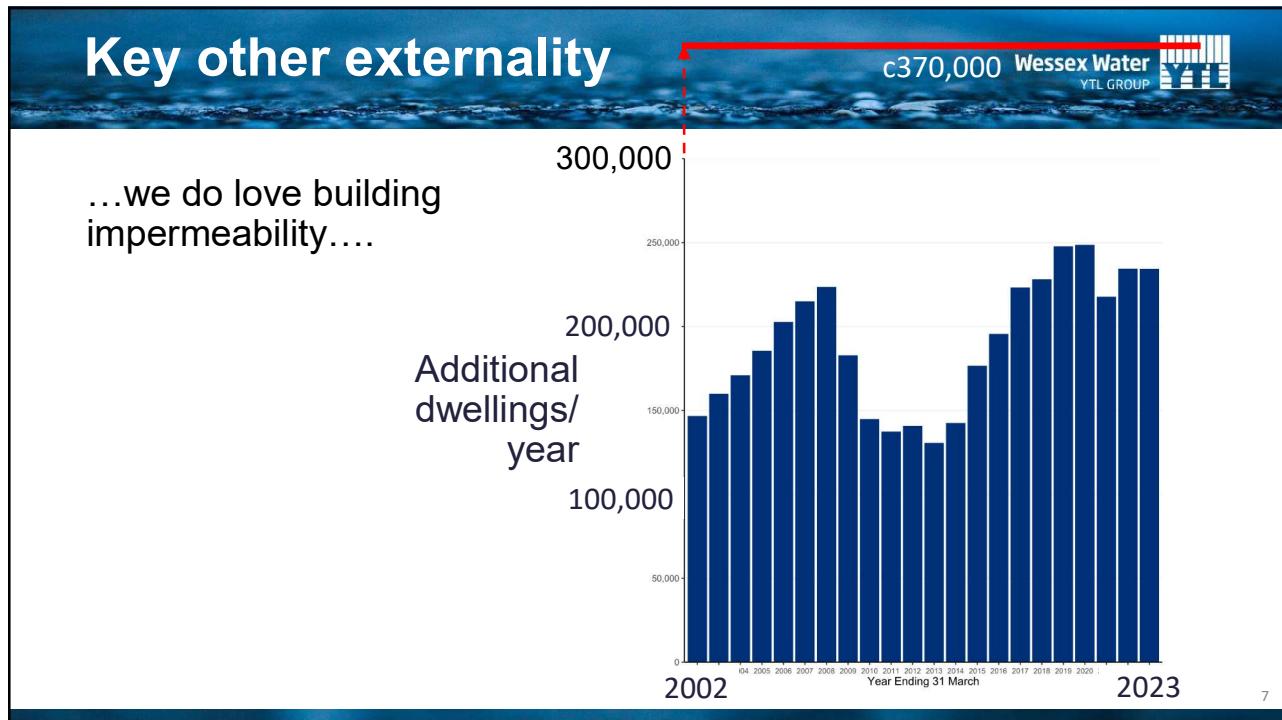
**Association of Drainage Authorities
Environment Day 4th Feb 2026**

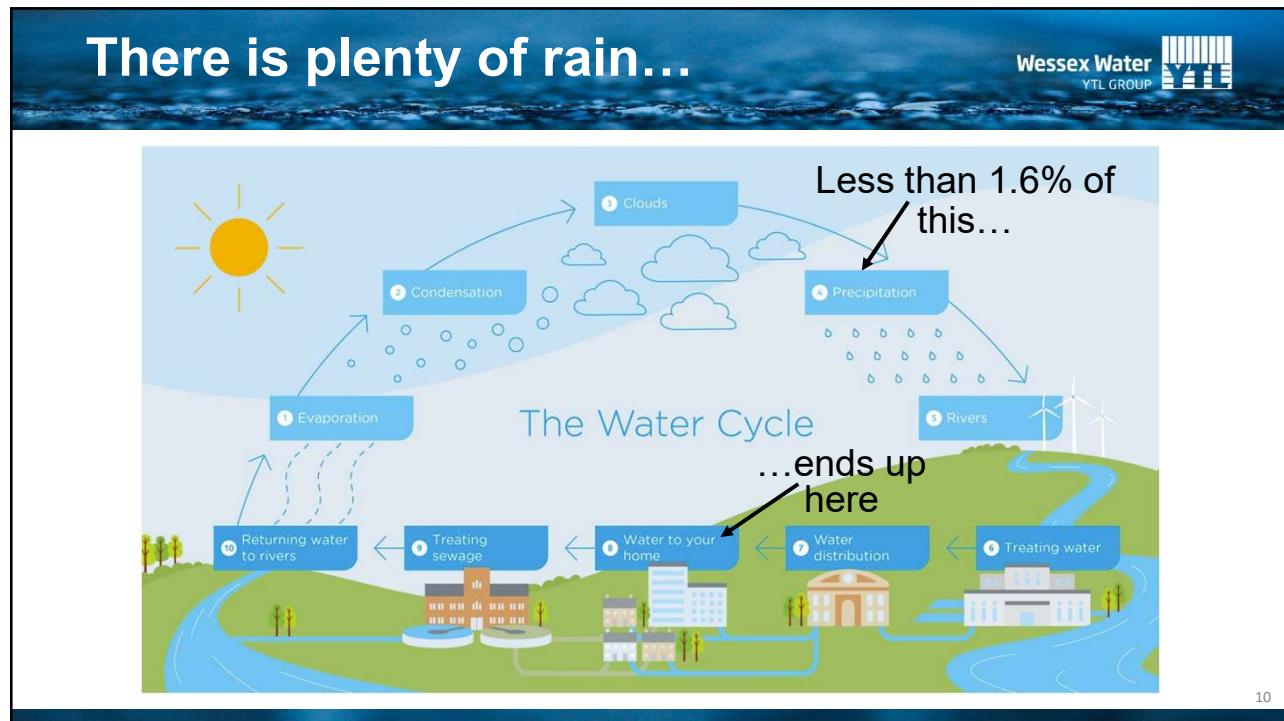
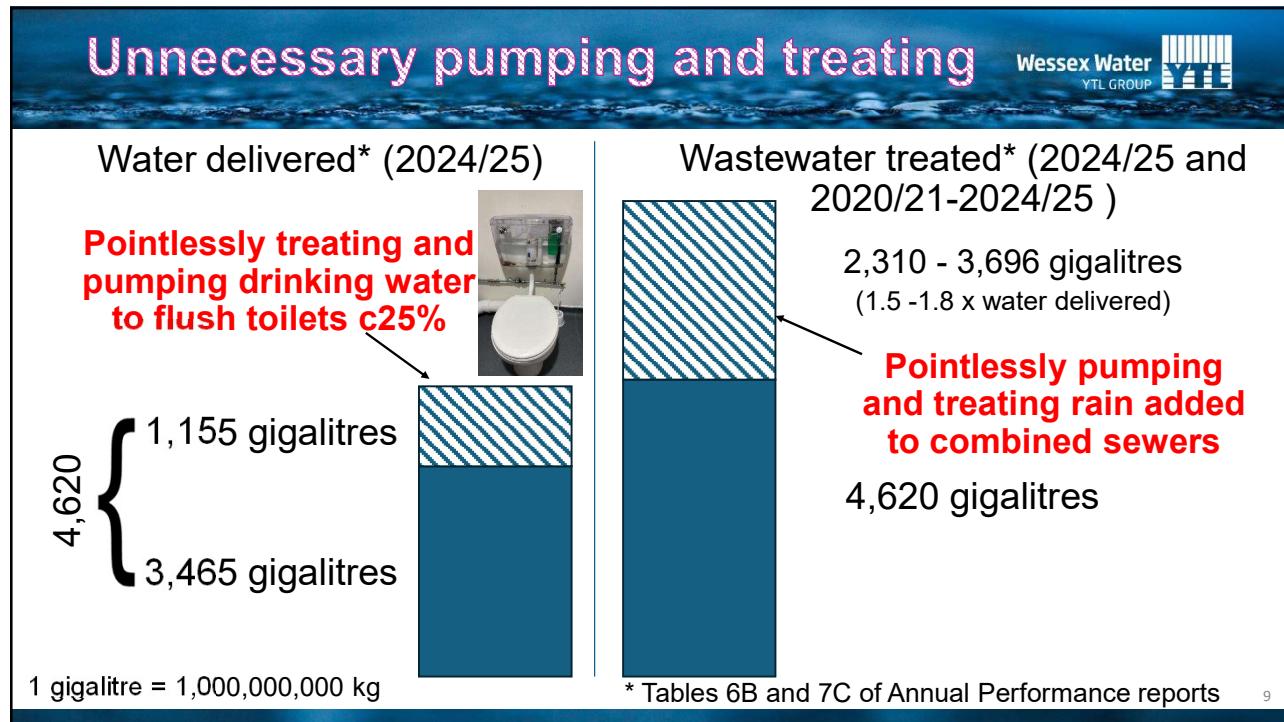
Matt Wheeldon – Infrastructure Development Director

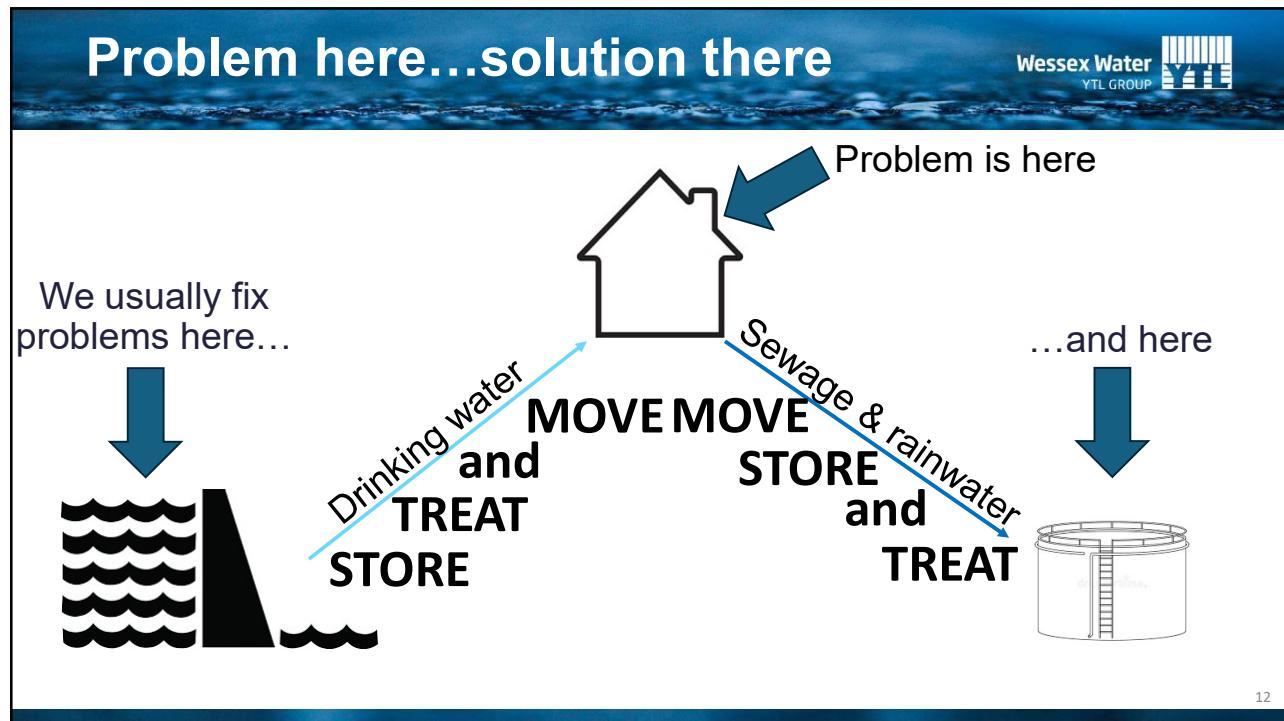
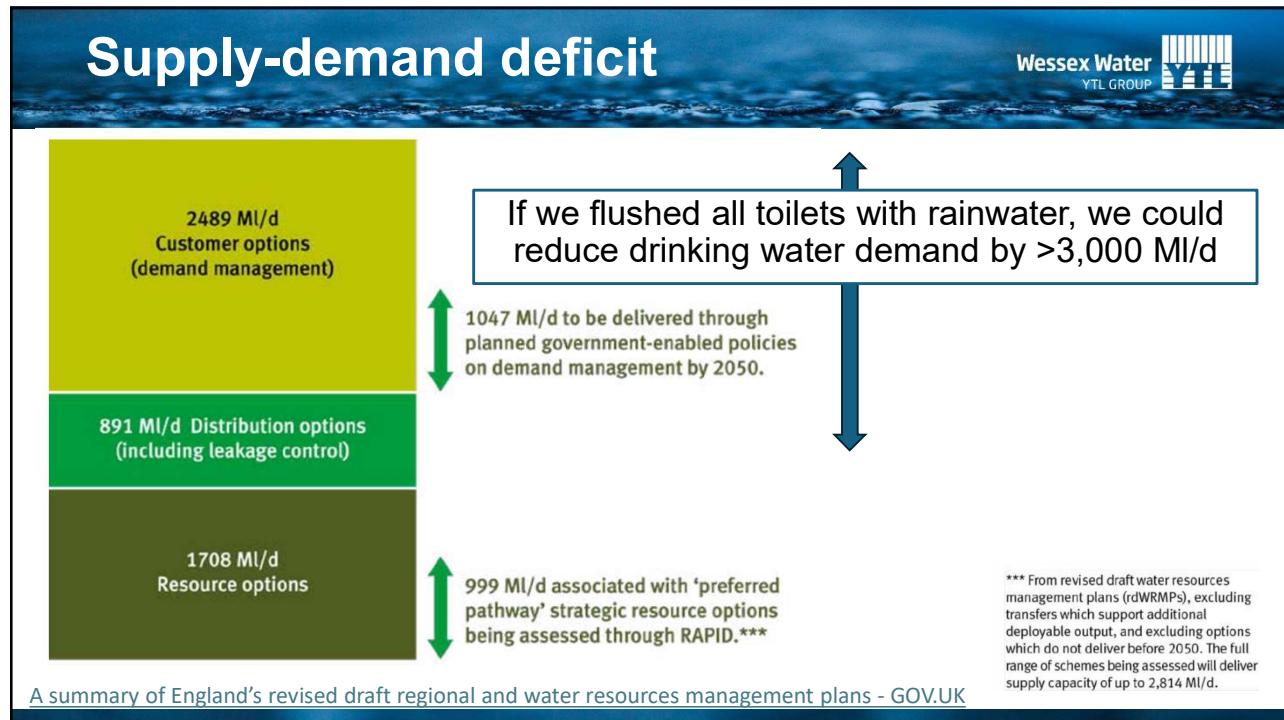


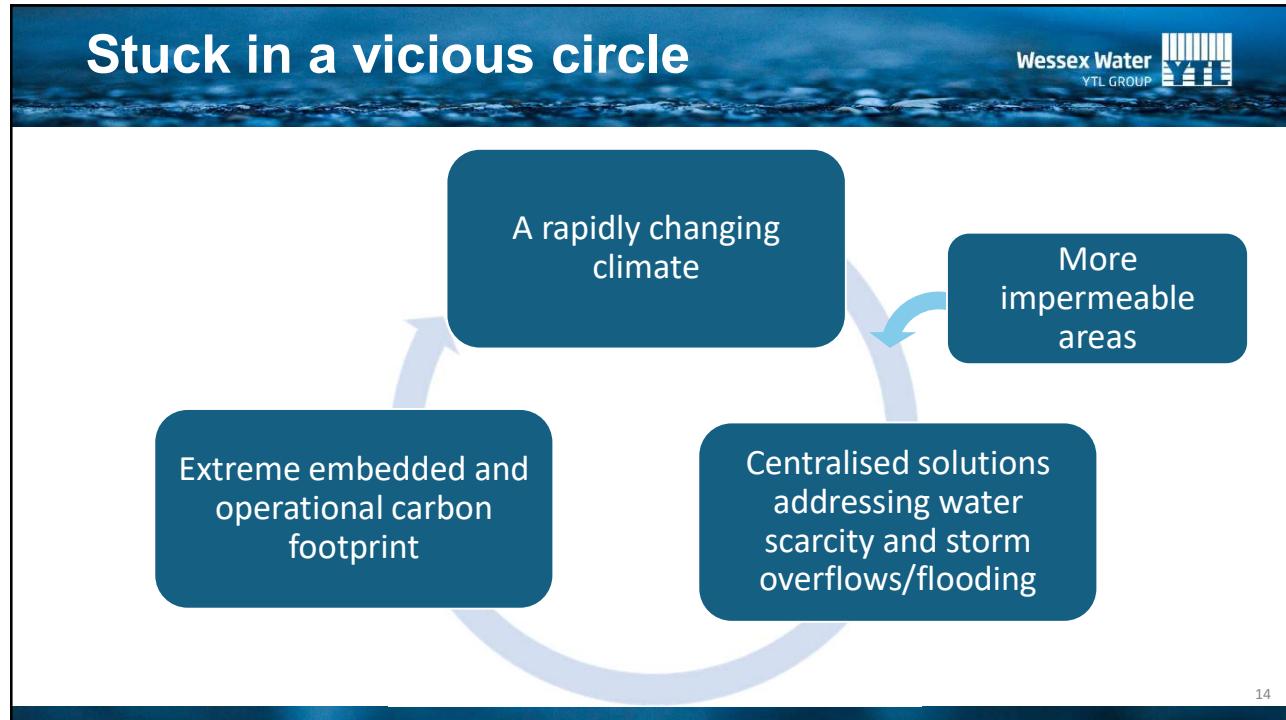
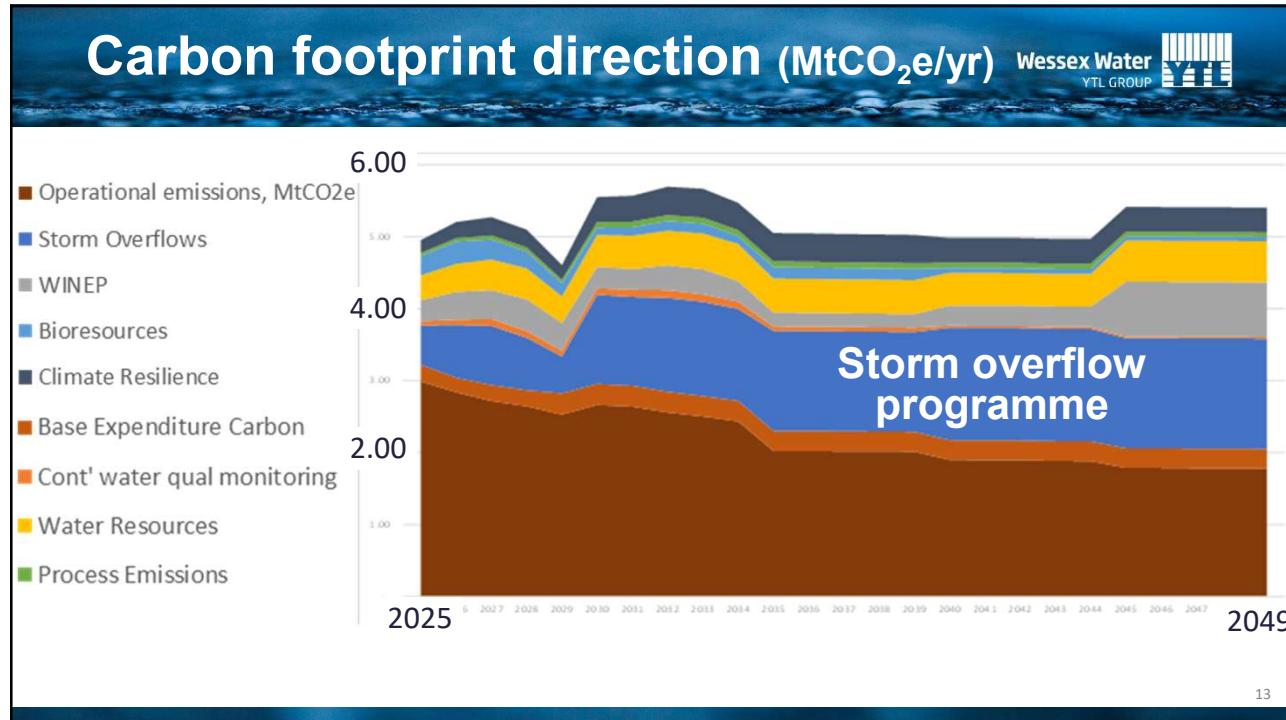












Q: How do we break this circle?



A: We manage rain better where it lands

15

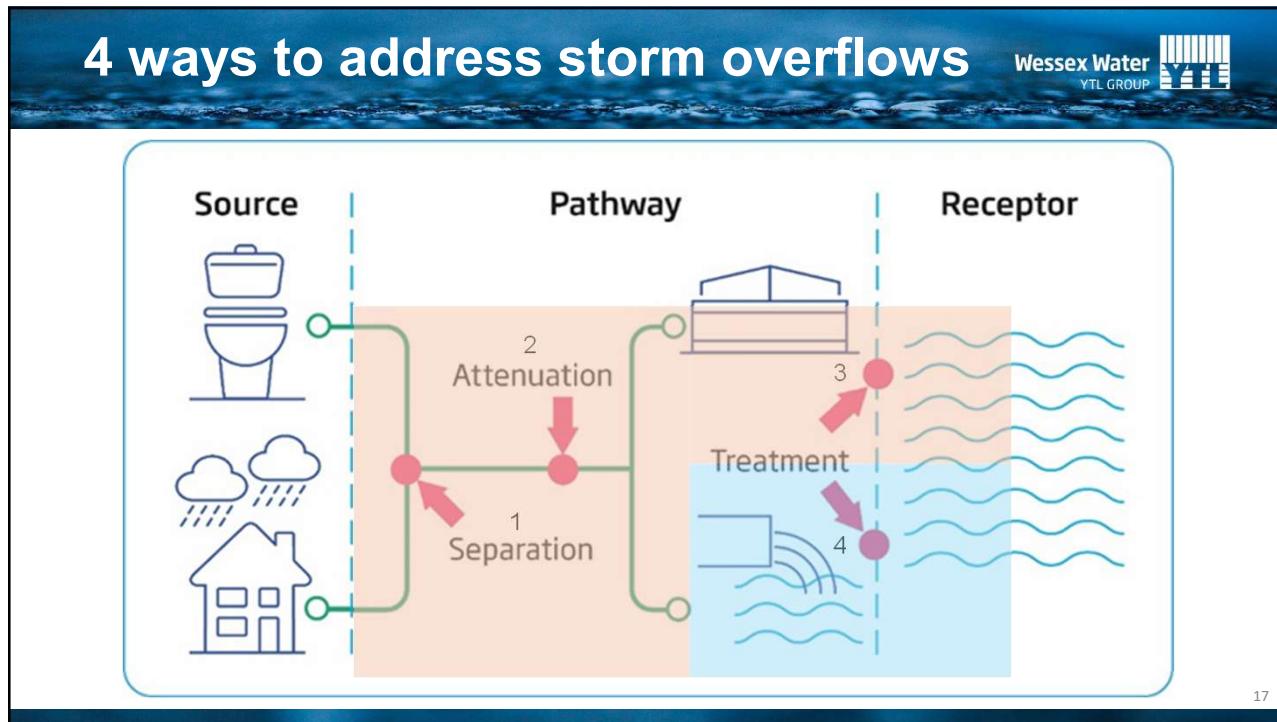
Simple 'back to nature' principles



1. Rain is a resource that should be captured locally and reused where possible
2. Rain should be returned back to the environment as close as possible to where it landed

“Simple principles”

16



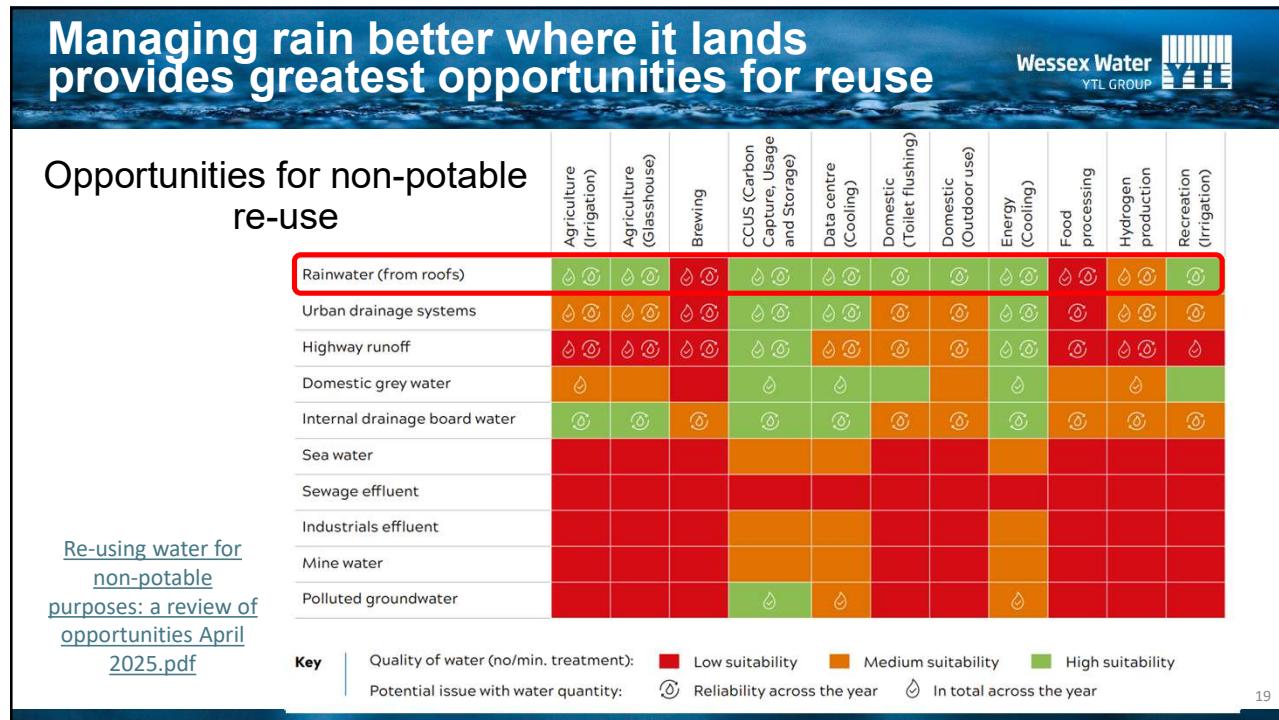
17

Storm overflow solutions and their relative benefits

Wessex Water YTL GROUP

Outcome	Solution	Relative Benefits Assessment				
		Water efficiency	Biodiversity	Customer bills	Embodied Carbon	Operational Carbon
Reduction in discharges	1a. Separate rain from roofs connected to combined sewers (property level)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1b. Separate rain from highways connected to combined sewers (community level)	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
	2. Attenuation (then treatment)	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	3. Treatment capacity increases at WRCs	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Reduction in harm	4a. Treatment at overflow: nature-based solutions	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
	4b. Treatment at overflow: grey solutions (e.g. UV)	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

18



The five pillars for change

Wessex Water YTL GROUP

A national rainwater management strategy

Legislation Regulation Economic incentives Education Technical Guidance

Directed by the 2 'simples'

21

Legislation changes required

Wessex Water YTL GROUP

Needs to be based on the two simple principles

Capture rain locally and reuse

New build

- Mandate rainwater harvesting (Doc G)

Retrofitting

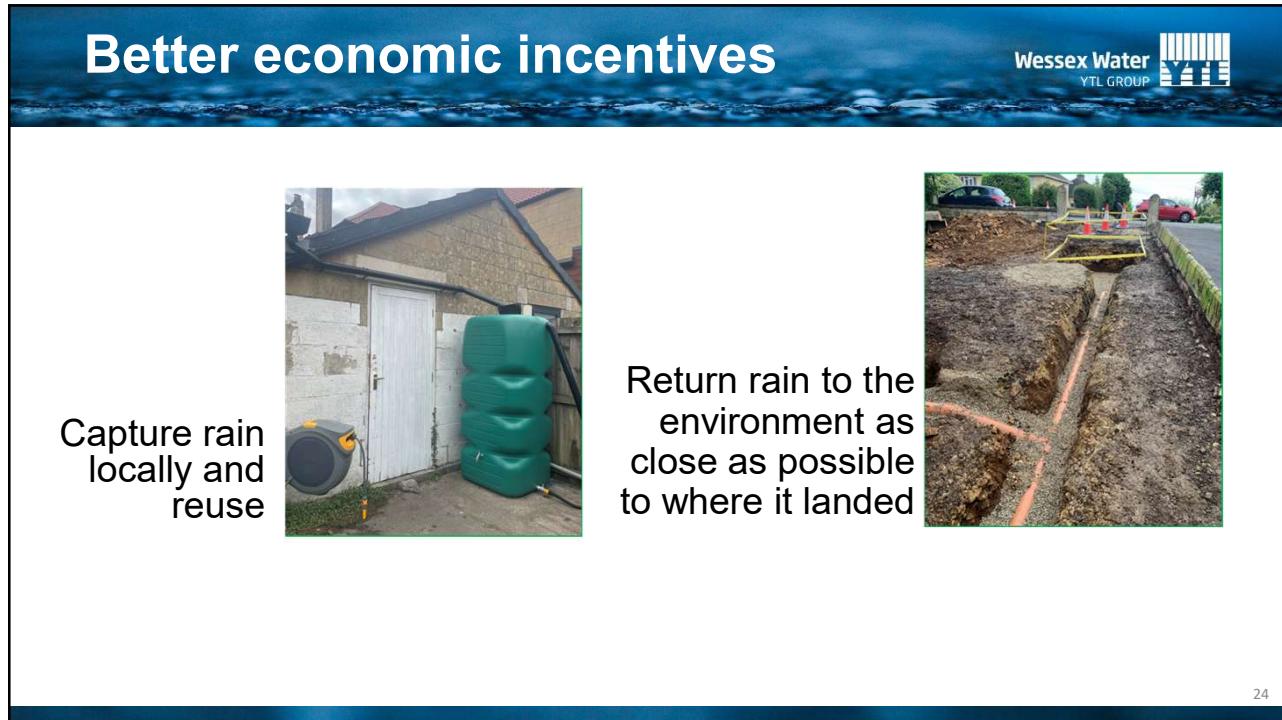
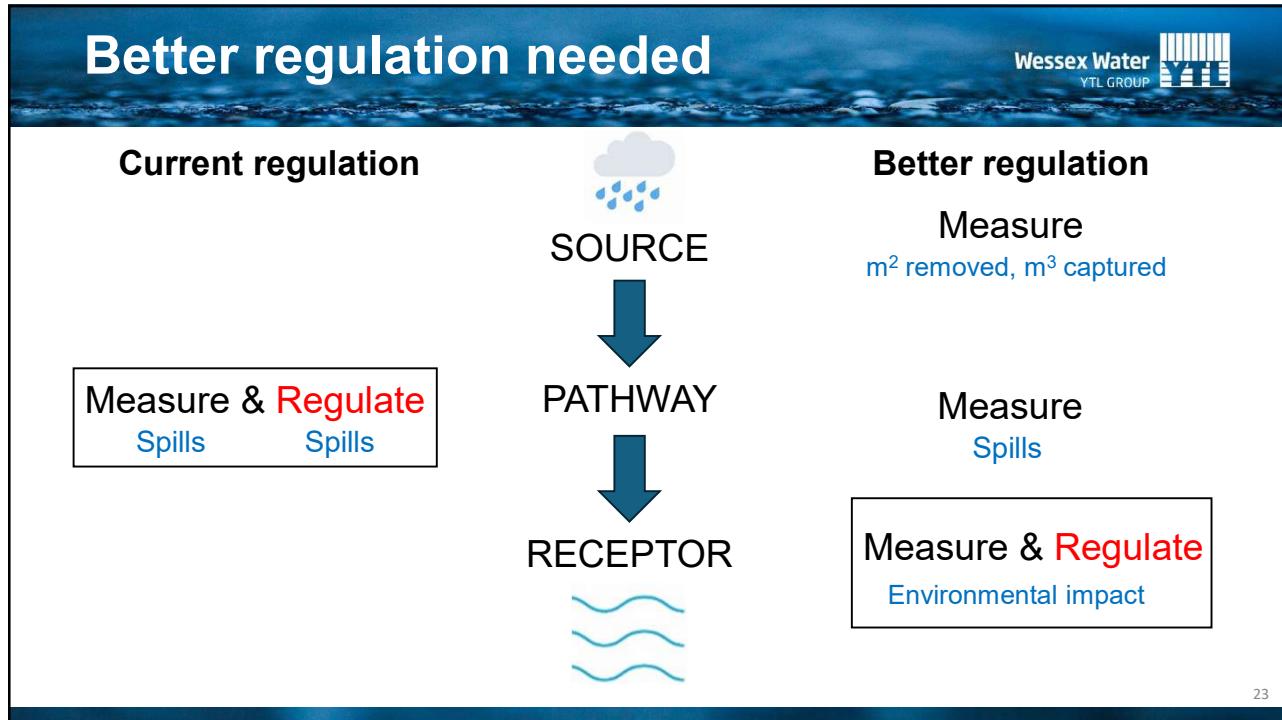
- Allow water companies to provide non-potable supplies (S68/218)

Return rain to the environment as close as possible to where it landed

- Mandate sustainable drainage (Sched 3/Doc H)
- Give powers to discharge rain to watercourses
- Remove the 'right' to add rain to sewers carrying sewage (S106)
- Charge for draining rain (S115)
- Enable sewerage undertakers to construct private rainwater drainage assets on private property (S114a)

NB Doesn't meet 1st principle

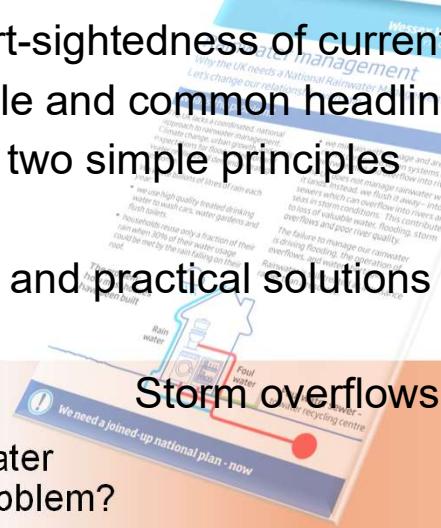
22



Education, education, education

Wessex Water YTL GROUP 

- Warn about short-sightedness of current direction of travel
- Embrace a simple and common headline narrative
- Underline it with two simple principles
- Get emotional
- Provide tangible and practical solutions to the obstacles



Storm overflows
a societal rainwater management problem?

a water company poo problem?

?

25

Technical guidance

Wessex Water YTL GROUP 

NEW National standards for SuDS - hierarchy

Capture rain locally and reuse ➔ 1. Collect for non-potable reuse

Return rain to the environment as close as possible to where it landed ➔ 2. To ground
3. To watercourse
4. To pipe carrying rain (highway drain, surface water sewer)
5. To combined sewer

...but they are non-statutory guidance...

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs 

26

The Rainwater Management Platform

The SuDS Manual

New context, drivers & policy

New knowledge & research

New technologies & best practice

Online, free to use

Wessex Water YTL GROUP

Ofwat Innovation Fund

Wessex Water YTL GROUP

UKWIR UK Water Industry Research

hrwallingford

Stantec

susdrain

ciria

27

Conclusion

Wessex Water YTL GROUP

A national rainwater management strategy

Legislation Regulation Economic incentives Education Technical Guidance

“Simples”

Red 'X' over a pen

Cartoon character in a red robe

28

