



## Developer Day questions

We've listed below the questions asked by attendees at our Developer Day on 30 January 2018, along with our responses.

**1. Is there an opportunity for consultants to have access to Thames Water GIS software with regards to Thames Water assets? (This would be similar to the Environment Agency approach of having open data.)**

For an asset location search, we still advise that either a property searches provider is used, or our own Property Searches team. You can also visit our office in Rose Kiln Lane, Reading, where we have a dedicated system for viewing the data. This is a free service, available Monday to Friday, from 7am to 9am and from 4pm to 5.30pm. You can book this via [thameswaterhelpdesk@emcoruk.com](mailto:thameswaterhelpdesk@emcoruk.com) or by calling our on-site security service, EMCOR, on 0845 263 7332.

**2. When you don't have all your asset information available, why don't you give a reduction to those that provide the information on your behalf as a project develops?**

This is a valid point and we will look into this as an option.

**3. Why don't you have a good understanding of your network and hence insist that we need to pay for modelling and wait patiently until this work has been completed?**

We have a complex network of 31,000km of water mains and more than 60,000km of sewers and drains. It's very difficult for us to maintain accurate models for all parts of our network at all times. We therefore maintain 'live' models for the 'busiest' part of our network and aim to increase the number and area covered.

We ceased charging developers for network modelling from 1 February 2018.

**4. Could you run 'Ask the expert' days in places other than Reading?**

This is a good suggestion. We've looked into alternative venues and the availability of our experts, and we're going to run a pilot scheme at a London venue to assess interest and attendance.

**5. Is Thames Water planning on adopting SuDs?**

We don't currently adopt sustainable urban drainage schemes (SuDS). Ofwat has agreed a series of Adoption Codes, the detail of which is still to be determined. Water UK, which represents water and sewerage companies, is supporting the sector in forming a standardised approach for these Adoption Codes. We expect the Wastewater Codes to be presented to Ofwat in April 2019. There is a high likelihood that under these codes some SuDs will be adoptable by sewerage companies.

**6. How will you encourage uptake of sustainable drainage when you will not adopt most sustainable drainage techniques?**

We are keen to explore opportunities to encourage developers to construct SuDS. Adoption may be one mechanism, but a variation on the infrastructure charge may be an alternative. We'll consider these (and other) options over the next year and understand if/how we can incorporate them into our 2019 charges.

**7. If water demand and deficit risk is so high why do you not offer incentives or contribute towards rainwater harvesting, greywater and sustainable systems?**

We're keen to work with developers to create new developments that are more water efficient and sustainably drained than the minimum requirements set out in Building Regulations and other policy documents. We considered incentivising more sustainable development by providing a variable infrastructure charge, but felt that the low take-up of similar offers from other water companies demonstrated that this would be insufficient to incentivise change. Please contact [alex.nickson1@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:alex.nickson1@thameswater.co.uk) or [graeme.kasselman@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:graeme.kasselman@thameswater.co.uk) if you are interested in this.

**8. Why are you not going to introduce connection charge reductions for water efficient buildings such as Severn Trent (especially when looking at Cape Town)?**

As mentioned in answer 7, we looked at introducing a variable infrastructure charge to incentivise more water efficient and sustainably drained new development. We reduced our infrastructure charge, meaning that it is now below the level we believe would incentivise developers to deliver homes beyond Buildings Regulations. We are keen to work with developers to explore opportunities to deliver more sustainable development. If you are interested please contact [alex.nickson1@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:alex.nickson1@thameswater.co.uk), [andrew.tucker@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:andrew.tucker@thameswater.co.uk) or [graeme.kasselman@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:graeme.kasselman@thameswater.co.uk)

**9. How do capacity issues get addressed in a planning application/consent and how realistic is it for reinforcement works to be delivered in time for development?**

Capacity issues should not need to be addressed through planning as it is the responsibility of the water and sewerage company. Through early engagement, we aim to implement reinforcement in line with the development needs.

**10. Will Thames Water stop imposing Grampian planning conditions now you are responsible for network reinforcement?**

We hope that by engaging early the need for conditions will be rare. They may be required in certain situations where early engagement hasn't occurred, or where information – such as the scale or phasing of a development – is missing from the planning submission.

**11. If you pay the infrastructure charge in 2018 to 'secure it', how long is it valid for and will it be 'fixed'? How long do you have to implement it?**

You'll be able to pay your infrastructure charges once you obtain a quote for a requisition, self-lay agreement, connection or adoption, or once you've actually connected to our water and/or wastewater network(s). We're unable to take payment for infrastructure charges before that point. Once infrastructure charges have been paid,

there's no time limit for connection and the charge will only change if you change your development. Please note that we don't provide a forecast of future infrastructure charges, as these will depend on the level of network reinforcement expenditure needed in response to developments being connected and on the number of connections being made in each year.

**12. For a developer with 12 simultaneous projects, would you appoint a dedicated Thames Water project manager for them all?**

We're currently reviewing our overall contact strategy with the added input from customers who opted to join our research workshop. A wider use of project managers is one of the contact method options for discussion, and we'll share the popular outcomes and proposed changes when they've been determined.

**13. In terms of surface water and its sustainable management, what are you doing to ensure a joined-up approach with lead local flood authorities and local planning authorities (as at the moment it needs improvement)?**

There are vastly different approaches taken by the various LLFAs and LPAs in our region. We support the use of SuDS and ask developers to approach the LLFA first to agree drainage matters. Where connection to our network is appropriate, we need to account for both the LPA / LLFA policy requirements and our sewerage system capacity. The LLFAs are organised in 13 strategic partnerships. We are regular attendees of their partnership meetings, where we have an opportunity to share issues and experiences and harmonise our approach.

**14. Who do we speak to, to start positive communication for new development? Is this via Developer Services or the help desk email address?**

Please use our pre-planning service when it is launched in April.

**15. An easier mechanism for dialogue is required with Thames Water, especially for planning. The generic pre-development response is often of little help.**

We're reviewing the pre-development process, in light of the new connection charges and changes, and will be releasing a revised approach in April.

**16. As a consultant, when applying for new connections for clients, we end up receiving water bills for the development – how can we change this?**

We recognise that this is happening and will be reviewing how billing data is captured. In the meantime, question 7 in the body of our application form asks who is responsible for paying water consumption charges.

**17. How does reinforcement required to deliver a site get included within your AMP period?**

It will be delivered from infrastructure charges and is therefore flexible within our five-year regulatory funding mechanism.

**18. In the situation where additional Section 104 foul water storage is required on-site because there is no capacity the foul water network, do you absorb part or all these cost?**

If the storage is being provided to preserve capacity in our network (as is normally the case) then this is network reinforcement and is at our cost. If we agree for you to construct the storage on our behalf, we will pay you for it.

**19. Can you produce a network plan highlighting areas/Flow Monitoring Zones with particular capacity or pressure issues to allow developers to plan early?**

We'll look into publishing our network capacity maps online. In order for these to be of use to developers, we would need to ensure that they were up to date and provided clear, functional information. We will discuss options on how to this could be achieved with our developer scrutiny panel.

**20. When we raise an issue with Developer Services, it tends not to be 'owned' by anyone. Responses need to be chased and no one appears accountable.**

We recognise that this can be an issue when dealing with a large department such as Developer Services, so we're currently reviewing how our teams handle your queries and researching your preferred methods of contact. We hope the changes will make the process faster and more interactive for you.

## **Additional questions**

### **New charges**

**21. How does the new infrastructure charge calculation method differ from the previous method?**

The current fixed infrastructure charge was set by Ofwat in our Instrument of Appointment in 1995 and has increased by RPI every year since, resulting in a charge of £365.45 for each of water and wastewater in the 2017/18 charging year. All companies charged the same amount. The income raised was not linked to investment in growing the networks. From 1 April 2018, infrastructure charges will be set each year, by each water company, at a level that covers the cost of their network reinforcement on a rolling five-year basis.

**22. What's wrong with the current charging system? Why not just increase infrastructure charges?**

In response to customer feedback, Defra and in turn Ofwat have implemented changes to the legal and regulatory framework that mean we have to change the way we charge for new connection services.

**23. How is Thames Water funding all of this?**

We have regulatory mechanisms for funding our activities that are overseen by Ofwat.

**24. How do you pay the infrastructure charge up front if you haven't started on site or got planning approval?**

You'll be able to pay your infrastructure charges once you obtain a quote for a requisition, self-lay agreement, connection or adoption, or once you have actually

connected to our water and/or wastewater network(s). We're unable to take payment for infrastructure charges before that point. Once infrastructure charges have been paid, there is no time limit for connection and the charge will only change if you change your development. Please note that we don't provide a forecast of future infrastructure charges, as these will be dependent on the level of network reinforcement expenditure needed in response to developments being connected and on the number of connections being made in each year.

**25. Your proposed infrastructure charges look artificially low and suggest developers have been substantially over-charged in recent years to boost your profits.**

Please see answer our answer to Q21.

**26. Do the requirements for complex works relate to both clean water supply and sewerage, i.e. sewer size?**

Yes, the existence of special circumstances as set out in section 14 of our charging arrangements will affect how we will calculate the charges for your new water main or your new sewer. We expect the charges for the majority of new water mains to be calculated using our published fixed charges. We'll calculate the charges for all new service connections and lateral drains using fixed charges. Charges for diversions will continue to be based on the reasonable cost incurred.

**27. Are you trying to become competitive on price for water mains and connections compared to self-lay companies? And what measures are you putting in place?**

Our charges have been set at a level that covers the overall cost we expect to incur to deliver the works we are asked to deliver. We don't make any profit from the work, nor have we tried to set a market price.

**28. What are the transitional arrangements for change in infrastructure charges i.e. schemes already quoted under old charges?**

If you've received a quote from us since 9 October 2017, we'll be in touch showing what the charges for your scheme would be under the new charging arrangements. As long as your connections are being made on or after 1 April 2018, you'll be able to choose to be charged under the new charging arrangements, although you'll have to receive and accept a new quote for us to proceed. If you've already paid for your quote, we'll refund or invoice you for any difference as appropriate.

**29. Will any reconciliation occur at the end of each financial year with regards to projected vs actual reinforcement costs?**

We'll be providing details of our infrastructure charge income and network reinforcement as part of our annual performance reporting after the end of each financial year.

**30. If the developer undertakes the off-site works to the point of connection (POC) will this be refunded either as a lump sum or reduced infrastructure cost?**

We'll fund any network reinforcement work that we agree with a developer that they should carry out on our behalf. We've yet to agree the mechanism for this; however it will not affect the amount of infrastructure charges payable for the development. It is generally assumed that off-site work to reach the POC is not network reinforcement and therefore not the responsibility of the Undertaker.

**31. Will a requote from April 2018 be the same as the corresponding illustration sent with a quote under the old charging scheme?**

Yes, unless your scheme has changed.

**32. If costs are apportioned due to the asset being upsized is that all associated costs or just the physical asset?**

We will be apportioning the costs of constructing the asset, including but not limited to survey, design, administration, traffic management and works costs.

**33. How will income offset be calculated and what if it exceeds the total infrastructures charges?**

Ofwat provided guidance in their November 2017 decision document on how the income offset should be calculated from April 2020 onwards. They have not clarified what should happen if the income offset is greater than the infrastructure charge payable, so we are unable to comment at this time.

**Wastewater**

**34. We experience decommissioning of rainwater harvesting systems post-development as there is no regulation for upkeep of these systems. Is this sustainable?**

Based on the question, it appears not. Where assets are being installed and included as part of the planning permission, we would expect them to be operational to achieve the service outlined in the application.

**35. When will your record plans be updated to show all sewers that have become adopted as a result of the 2011 bulk sewer transfer?**

We don't yet have a proactive programme of sewer identification and mapping. As we find the assets and do work on them, we'll improve our mapping accordingly.

**36. Regarding your examples of complex works that won't be eligible for fixed charges, 2.5m isn't very deep for a sewer?**

No, however we were unable to come up with fixed prices for the few schemes we construct deeper than this, which would be representative of the cost of construction.

**37. In what circumstances will Thames Water seek Grampian conditions on planning applications post-April 2018, or will the response to planning applications now say yes there will be capacity, but set one scale which may restrict the development?**

We hope that by engaging early, the need for planning conditions will be rare. They may be required in certain situations where early engagement hasn't occurred, or there is missing information in the planning submission – for example, when the scale of the development is unknown, or the phasing of the development is unknown.

**38. Explain how the Developer Services team can ease the pain I experience in dealings with your existing assets and asset protection.**

The first step is to contact our Property Searches department to obtain asset information and undertake surveys to positively identify their location on site. Then contact

Developer Services to undertake asset protection studies if the need arises. There's guidance at: <https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development/Working-near-or-diverting-our-pipes>

**39. Will Thames Water consider separating out surface water charges from the wastewater charges, as other water companies have already done? This would encourage more SuDS.**

Please see our answer to Q7.

**40. Why does it take Thames Water so long, and is problematic, to obtain access for line and level surveys in relation to build over and adjacent?**

This is an important health and safety issue regarding confined spaces. It requires proper planning in terms of access and flow, to overcome issues. We have to consult with our operational teams, so this all takes time.

**41. Adoption of SuDS falls in 'no man's land' at present, with neither Lead Local Flood Authorities nor sewer authorities taking responsibility. Will this change?**

Currently we do not adopt SuDS. Ofwat has agreed a series of Adoption Codes. The detail is still to be determined and Water UK is supporting the water utility sector in a standardised approach for these Adoption Codes. We expect the Wastewater Codes to be presented to Ofwat in April 2019. There is a high likelihood that under these codes some SuDS will be adoptable by Undertakers.

**42. What is being done to improve access to your waste network for sewer condition, and line and level, surveys?**

All sewers are different. Health and safety is paramount, and assessments can take time. This has already improved and the person wanting to enter that sewer needs a TWOSA (Thames Water Operational Safety Authorisation).

**43. Will the efficiency from greater recycling and rainwater harvesting be removed from the storm storage or waste calls?**

With respect to foul water discharge rates and volumes, potable water recycling and rainwater harvesting do not make a difference. Water efficient fittings do make a difference and we have already down-rated our methodology to accommodate this. As further evidence emerges of the longevity of these efficient fittings and greater efficiency levels are reached we will again revise our methodology.

**44. Are there plans to take back the trade effluent discharge licence process from the retailers? They don't seem to understand it, which causes long delays.**

We're aware of the issues customers are having. There are no plans to take it back, and it's fair to say we're all still learning the new way of working. However, MOSL is working with wholesalers and retailers to improve the processes that include trade effluent.

## Modelling and timescales

### **45. Planning permission may not be granted where capacity issues are known locally, therefore the triggers presented for undertaking modelling may not work.**

In these cases we would work collaboratively to agree a phasing schedule for the site that will allow capacity concerns to be addressed.

### **46. If Thames Water is undertaking modelling at their cost, will the developer have certainty of a timeframe to complete this process?**

Early engagement is crucial, and we strongly encourage you to make a pre-planning enquiry with us as early on as possible so we can start a dialogue. The more advance notice we have of a possible development, the more time we have to evaluate if modelling is needed and carry it out.

We're launching a new pre-planning enquiry service from 1 April 2018 – using this free service will give you visibility of any capacity issues and when we'll start modelling (where needed) and how long it will take. You won't pay for any network modelling or network reinforcement needed, and if your schedule means you need modelling started ahead of our usual timelines, we'll simply ask you to underwrite the modelling costs just in case your development doesn't go ahead.

### **47. How much will pre-development enquires now cost and what will the scope of them cover?**

We are re-designing this into a new pre-planning enquiry service, and this will be published by 1 April. The new service will be free until at least April 2019.

### **48. You state six weeks for a clean water application but reply with up to 35 weeks modelling for a 150-unit development.**

This will change with the new pre-planning enquiry service from 1 April. We're working to make our guidance and letters much more informative.

### **49. What is the lead time to provide the reinforcement information and will it affect the design lead time?**

As part of the new pre-planning enquiry service we will publish some indicative lead times.

### **50. What is the current lead time to carry out the reinforcement work and would you offer this work out to SLPs to possibly reduce lead times?**

The lead time will depend on the solution that is designed and we can't commit to specific timescales. Network reinforcement work will be subject to our procurement policy and to OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) requirements and SLPs may be able to compete for the work.

## Water and self-lay

### **51. Whenever we take over a site for development the water meters are not recorded on Thames Water asset records and are a problem. The temporary building water supplies [issue results in] threats of fines from Thames Water.**

If your development site already has service pipes that you'll be using for building purposes, and the service pipes are metered with a Thames Water approved meter, it's important that you contact us to arrange to have the meter processed into a billing account. Please go to <https://www.open-water.org.uk/> for full information prior to any work taking place on site. If there's no Thames Water meter present on site then you need to complete the form **Application to provide clean water for new developments** on our website. We only apply a retrospective percentage charge for water if the correct process has not been followed and we have no way of knowing the water consumption used.

**52. Why don't Thames Water allow for a metered temporary building supply, as the present policy of 0.17 per cent of development value is not a fair system?**

A metered temporary building supply is good – we just require the installation of the meter to be at the onset of a development, and it needs to be a Thames Water meter for accurate readings. If you complete our online application before starting your development we'll discuss your requirements with you. We'll only apply the fixed percentage where this has not been done, and if a Thames Water approved meter has not been installed and processed into a billing account from the start of use. This is because we have no way of assessing the true water consumption.

**53. How much will the bill payer pay on top of what they are paying now, and will this be transparent on their bill?**

There are many factors which impact customer bills on a year by year basis. This is just one of them. We don't break out the impact of individual elements, but for a typical household customer, Thames Water's average annual household bill will rise by around 2 per cent (from £376 to £383). This means an increase of less than inflation.

**54. How much water is lost through leaks and how much of that is Thames Water's or the customer's responsibility?**

We currently lose 677 million litres of water a day (2016-17 Annual Return figure) through leakage, which is approximately a quarter of the water we put into supply. About a quarter of leaks are 'customer side' leaks – that is, leakage between the meter and the property (water lost in leaks within a property is known as 'wastage'). Anything considered to be 'leakage' is our responsibility. We are keen to reduce leakage and wastage wherever we can and have a variety of programmes to do this.

**55. Are there plans to install domestic water meters within apartments as opposed to landlords/communal risers?**

There are no plans to do this. It's not a desirable option due to access for maintenance and replacement work.

**56. In forward planning does Thames Water consider construction water demand to be negligible? If not, how do you plan to incentivise efficient usage of water on site?**

Water used in construction and development is considered in our forward planning. We extrapolate data on current construction sector water use to inform our forecasts. While on-site construction water use is not a large volume compared to other sectors,

we would be keen to work with developers to identify opportunities to reduce water use in the construction, particularly on major water uses, such as concrete batching and dust suppression.

**57. What is Thames Water's policy on sharing residents' apartment water usage, subject to resident approval of course?**

The purpose of metering individual apartments is to be able to bill for the water clearly used by each bill payer, by apartment, and hence two different property owners cannot pay for a combined usage.

**58. If self-lay is more cost effective, how do I find out what companies we can use?**

You can find an up-to-date list of self-lay providers on the Lloyd's Register website at <http://lr.org/wirs>

**59. Is the self-lay agreement being looked at in order to increase take up? Make the agreement between the water company and self-lay company only.**

The National Self-Lay Group is working on a revised self-lay agreement to be used across England and Wales. It remains as a tri-partite agreement with the developer, the SLP and the water company.

## Communications

**60. Half the Thames Water people who have presented or answered questions are not shown on your Developer Services team chart. Where do they fit in? Could you provide a wider org chart?**

You've raised a good point in that some of the presenters at the event were from roles outside Developer Services, but with whom we work collaboratively on matters such as sustainability and capacity. The 'Developer Services key roles and contacts' chart we handed out was produced to give an instant overview of the teams you're most likely to have direct dealings with throughout the stages of your planning and applications relating to individual projects. There's definitely the potential to produce a wider view of who we work with internally and on what types of issues, and we'll take this as a lesson learned for our next Developer Day.

**61. Why is it such a hurdle to get a water service inspection done? There are lots of data protection questions, only to be transferred to someone else, taking about five minutes.**

We understand that our call centre isn't always the best solution for business-to-business customers like developers. We're running a customer improvement workshop on 'contacting us' to help us understand how to address this. We'll advertise the outcomes of the workshop through our newsletter.

**62. Format acceptance forms so that the return address is in the correct position for window envelopes please.**

Thank you – we're gradually reviewing all of our customer literature and as we make updates to our forms we'll make this a design consideration.

## Other questions

### **63. Where are the changes that will take place to the Developer Services wholesale and retail markets this year in your customer programme?**

The introduction of Developer Services into the retail non-household market has been postponed until April 2020. We believe that this is a sensible move given the level of regulatory change that is happening over the next 18 months across both Developer Services companies and the New Appointment and Variation wholesalers (NAVs).

### **64. Given that you will still be receiving income and have fewer customers, hence less hassle, would you prefer NAVs to provide more connections going forward?**

Inset appointments are considered by Ofwat on a case by case basis where they are in the best interests of the impacted customers. The costs of any bulk supply of water or waste water services are set to recover Thames Water's costs, so we are neutral as to whether any individual development is supplied directly by ourselves or a NAV.

### **65. How is work progressing with the Tideway super-sewer in London? Is it on programme and budget?**

The Thames Tideway Tunnel (TTT) is being delivered by Bazalgette Tunnel Limited ('Tideway') and Thames Water, and is due to be complete in 2023.

The project has hit a number of key milestones over the past year, including the arrival of three of Tideway's tunnel boring machines, and the start of shaft construction on three of its main drive sites. One shaft has already been completed at Tideway's Kirtling Street site in Battersea. Tunnelling is set to start later this year. Thames Water's System Works sites are being delivered to both programme and budget. Thames Water's tunnel boring machine began tunnelling within Beckton Sewage Treatment Works in November 2017, and is due to finish tunnelling in May 2018.

Thames Water's Enabling Works Programme for the Thames Tideway Tunnel is in its final stages, marking the completion of five years' worth of preparatory work for the TTT. The project is currently live on 19 sites; in total, there will be 24 across London.

For further detail about progress at each construction site, see <https://www.tideway.london/the-tunnel/construction-sites/>.