



### 3. The natural environment is protected and improved in the way we deliver our services

#### What do customers want?

Customers, stakeholders and regulators expect us to improve the quality of the environment. We are delivering a programme of environmental improvements and, where possible, achieving this in a more sustainable way which can be maintained over the long term and protects resources for future generations. We aim to run and maintain assets such as wastewater treatment works, water sources and pipelines in an effective way which avoids polluting the environment. We are also looking to adapt to the effects of things that are outside our control, such as climate change and population growth, and encourage customers to make changes to their behaviour so we can reduce the amount of water we need to take from environmentally sensitive sites where water is sometimes scarce.

We have made nine performance commitments about protecting and improving the natural environment through the way we provide our services. We have achieved our target, or are on track with delivery, for seven of these in year three.

#### What have we done?

We continue to see a reduction in pollution incidents as a result of our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan. This plan contains a number of strategic initiatives and targeted approaches for our staff, covering topics such as culture, training, maintenance and systems thinking. We use systems thinking to bring together information about our assets, operational data and tools to help us understand our wastewater network and how it might perform in different sets of circumstances. As a result of this effort, we have achieved 16.29 pollution incidents per 10,000 kilometres of sewer. This is our best ever performance and represents a continued reduction in incidents from the 2021 level of 17.71, which was our previous best year. This performance includes no category 1 to 2 events, which are considered the most serious in terms of environmental effect.

To improve air quality, we want to reduce the environmental effect of emissions from bioresources sites, where we use sewage sludge to produce energy. Work carried out in years one to three has meant we released less nitrous oxide per unit of energy produced from our facilities. Continued monitoring

and maintenance of assets meant we were able to reduce the amount of nitrous oxide released per unit of energy produced to 1.07 NOx/GWh (nitrous oxide per gigawatt hour), beating our target of no more than 1.42 NOx/GWh. This year we have been able to generate more renewable energy while minimising the effect of emissions on air quality.

This year we have continued to treat and successfully recycle all of our biosolids, which is the final product from our bioresources operations. The biosolids were used in agriculture and for land reclamation (to restore soil quality and ecosystems). Measures have been put in place to improve training at our bioresources sites and to increase focus on sampling practices. This has resulted in us meeting our performance commitment for a second year running. We expect to maintain this performance over the rest of the AMP.

We have also continued with our overall improvement plan so that our water and wastewater treatment works meet the conditions of their Environment Agency permit, and have put in place individual intensive care plans for sites we consider to be at high risk of failing to meet these in the future. This year, 98.45% of treatment works met the conditions of their Environment Agency permit, against a target of 100%. This means that six treatment works (out of a total 388) did not meet all the conditions of their permit.

Our performance commitment on protecting the environment from growth and development measures the extra capacity that we build at our wastewater treatment works to allow for the future growth in population. This year we have delivered two projects, but are currently slightly behind against our target. We originally planned to deliver these two projects in year two, but they were delayed to year three with the full agreement of the Environment Agency. Other projects are being delivered early to compensate for the two delayed projects. We are also considering further options to make sure we still meet our target for building extra capacity within the AMP.

7/9

measures achieved

