

**Press release 9 June 2017**

## **Taking the lead – new group will drive a more customer-led water industry**

*The 'Leadership Group on Water Efficiency and Customer Participation' will bring together senior UK water industry leaders in a more ambitious approach to wasting less water - using this to drive a more customer-led culture.*

Waterwise is launching a brand new Leadership Group with the UK water industry - to use more ambitious water efficiency programmes to track and improve customer service. Water companies know they need to improve their customer service as well as the resilience of the services they provide, and increasing the reach of their water efficiency plans will help them to do both. This Group will help raise sights and share best practice.

The first roundtable event will be held on 9 June. The Group will focus on increasing customer participation in future projects and initiatives, and motivating customers and communities to get actively involved in reducing water waste. Waterwise will challenge and support the sector on ambition and innovation.

Industry resilience leader Jean Spencer will chair the Group. It will include Waterwise Managing Director Nicci Russell and water sector Chief Customer Officers, Customer Service Directors and Managing Directors.

Speaking at the Roundtable, Nicci Russell said: 'Customers should be at the heart of the water sector and it's great that the industry are taking this seriously. Working with customers on water efficiency gets them actively involved - they see and touch water every day, and have an intimate relationship with it unlike the one they have with energy or telecoms! Scaling water efficiency up in the right way will help companies track and improve customer service.'

'The Leadership Group offers a new opportunity to involve customers in thinking about their future water services. Motivating people to take action, and empowering communities through rewards, could change the way we think about water, and revolutionise services.'

'Of course water efficiency is also key to increasing the resilience of services - not just now after a dry winter, but always. UK water companies have shown that water can be saved, but they can go further: water efficiency is a drop in the ocean of total industry investment. Through this Group we'll encourage water companies to be ambitious in water efficiency, customer service and resilience planning and investment. We're joining the dots!'

Nicci went on to say: 'As Ofwat Chief Executive Cathryn Ross said at the launch of Ofwat's ['TappedIn'](#) report on 23 March, 'As we move beyond value for money to the value of water to communities, customers and the environment, water efficiency is a fundamental strategic issue, rightly on every Board agenda, and must be approached through the customer lens rather than as a dry technical supply demand issue.'

Group Chair and Anglian Water Director for Strategic Growth and Resilience, Jean Spencer, added: 'Water will be one of the defining issues of this century. Water crises are the third biggest global risk and 40 per cent of the global population will be living in areas

of severe water stress by 2050. In the UK, [The Water Resources Long Term Planning Framework](#) published last year showed that future droughts are likely to be more serious and will affect all parts of the country, so it's vital water leaders unite on this topic. Innovative solutions and collaboration are essential.

“At Anglian Water we've made great strides in engaging customers on their water use through metering and water efficiency programmes, and making it a strategic focus. At Anglian we still put the same amount of water into supply today as we did 30 years ago, despite a 30% increase in the population. We're looking at how we push the dial further - and we want to be able to share as well as learn. This Group will help do that more readily. We welcome Government and Ofwat's increased focus on this topic, and now it's time for the industry to raise its ambitions again on its engagement with customers.”

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**You can follow [@waterwise](#) on Twitter for more information, and we will be using [#TalkingWater](#) to promote the leadership group, including via voxpops from Leadership Group members on what the new initiative will mean for their customers**

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