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Water Efficiency Strategy for the UK launched in London

A strategic approach to delivering more ambitious water efficiency is needed to help ensure enough water for people, the economy and the environment, now and in the future.

UK expert body Waterwise today launched its Water Efficiency Strategy for the UK. The strategy sets out an ambitious blueprint for a water-efficient UK - where water is used wisely, every day, everywhere, and this helps to tackle the very real challenges of climate change and environmental degradation we face now and in the future.

Waterwise is the leading UK authority on water efficiency and well-known in the sector for driving ambitious actions and innovative thinking on water efficiency. The strategy will help all of us aim high on water efficiency. Some great work is happening already, but an international assessment released in May 2016 ranked London 34, Birmingham 28, and Manchester 26 out of 50 major cities for water efficiency (Copenhagen ranked first). Key recommendations and actions include:

- a national water efficiency communication platform, and more research on developing a water-saving culture;
- supporting the 110 litre per person per day water efficiency standard in new homes in areas of water stress;
- improving information for customers on the water efficiency of products they buy - and addressing issues with current products such as the 4% of toilets leaking on average 215 litres per day;
- water companies should scale up ambition and innovation in their water efficiency programmes with customers
- regulators should ensure their high ambition for water efficiency is reflected in their analysis of company plans

The publication of the strategy follows a consultation exercise Waterwise held from November 2016 to January 2017. A Water Efficiency Strategy Steering Group supported by Water UK has been formed to push forward delivery of the actions - chaired by Jean Spencer, Anglian Water's Executive Director of Strategic Growth and Resilience, and sector resilience leader. The strategy is led by Waterwise, and its production has been a joint enterprise with partners across the UK water sector - and its delivery will be too.

The strategy is being launched at 10:30am on Monday 19th June at The Trunk, Artworks, Elephant and Castle. Waterwise Managing Director Nicci Russell, Ofwat Director Trevor Bishop and Severn Trent Water Efficiency Manager Doug Clarke will set out what the strategy means for customers, the economy and the environment. Aaron Burton, Director of Policy and Innovation at Waterwise, will discuss why we need a strategy, its key recommendations and actions, and next steps - working together with the sector to aim higher and continue innovating on water efficiency



Speaking at the launch, Nicci Russell said: ‘This strategy sets out a vision for what a water-efficient UK could look like - with all of us really valuing water, and using it wisely every day. Lots of great stuff is happening already, but we need more innovation and ambition, and I’m really delighted that partners across the sector have agreed actions to help us deliver our strategy. In coming decades, we’re going to be kicking ourselves if we’ve only dabbled in wasting less water - meaning less to go round for people, the economy and the environment. Without water none of these things can function.

‘And it’s down to all of us to take action to drive more water efficiency - governments, regulators, water companies, manufacturers, businesses, workplaces, and all of us in our homes and gardens. It’s totally doable if we work together - and that’s what we’re going to do. We’re aiming high in water efficiency, together.

‘The Water Efficiency Strategy for the UK is a great opportunity to deliver more ambitious water efficiency in partnership - building on work to date.’

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.

‘I’m really looking forward to working collaboratively as a sector to make this strategy happen - building on the great work we’ve done together so far.’

Ofwat Chief Executive Cathryn Ross said: ‘It’s really clear that far more ambitious water efficiency will need to be a key part of how the water sector delivers resilient and affordable services to its customers, now and in the future. Water efficiency is a key strategic issue - and one that is entirely in line with the sector’s drive to become more customer-led. I’m delighted that Waterwise and the sector are working together to help establish new frontiers on water efficiency.’

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Waterwise was founded in 2005 and is the leading authority on water efficiency in the UK. We are an independent, not-for-profit organisation, receiving funding from supporters across and beyond the water sector and wider sponsorship and research projects. We like to be at the front, leading and supporting innovative efforts to realise our mission; that water will be used wisely, every day, everywhere. Our Water Efficiency Strategy for the UK sets out delivery against this mission, working with others. It will help us all aim high on water efficiency.

You can follow @waterwise on Twitter for more information, and we will be using #WESstrategy to promote the strategy, including via voxpops from stakeholders on what the strategy and actions mean for them delivering water efficiency



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