**WRSE responds to Ofwat’s Water Efficiency Fund second consultation**

In response to Ofwat’s second consultation on the proposed Water Efficiency Fund, Water Resources South East (WRSE) has called on the water industry regulator to start planning the fund’s roll-out now, rather than wait until the start of the next five-year planning period.

Lee Dance, Organisational Director, explains: “The Water Efficiency Fund needs to stimulate a transformative, sustained and measurable reduction in water demand that would otherwise not take place.

“The fund must be implemented at pace and at scale to maximise opportunities and benefits – so we would like Ofwat, and the wider government, to publicly back the campaign and help bring it to the forefront of people’s minds.

“Given the urgency needed, and likely time to build momentum we are calling on Ofwat to form a working group as soon as possible – and roll out the funding for the next five years at least.

“We’d also like to see the campaign build on the success of the recent energy efficiency campaign, rather than see this as a separate issue. Energy and water use are intrinsically linked and there’s a real benefit to tackling the topics together.”

WRSE supports Ofwat’s intention to fund both a national behaviour change campaign and a competitive process for water efficiency projects but warns it must be distinct from Ofwat’s existing Innovation Fund and complement the water industry’s efforts without adding to the pressure it already faces.

Lee adds: “As well as behaviour change, we want to see the fund used to hard-engineer water efficiency into buildings and water-using devices, to make water efficiency simple.

“We have asked Ofwat to test water re-use technology from household level through to new housing developments, make domestic bathroom suites more water-efficient and use smart data to target business sectors where the greatest savings could be made.

“Opportunities for replacing some tap water use with non-potable water – such as in agriculture or data centres, should also be investigated.

“Robust data analysis must be put in place to monitor and assess the effectiveness of specific activities, such as metering, water company campaigns, leakage reductions and the new government campaign – so it is clear which measures are most worthwhile.”

Delivering against ambitious demand management targets is an integral part of the regional plan for south east England, reflecting the region’s targets to cut leakage and help business and household customers use less water.

Read our full response to Ofwat XXXX or find out more about our revised draft regional plan (LINK).