



Media Release

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Working Together for the Future of Water

Water Resources East is officially established as an independent not for profit company

Today, Water Resources East (WRE) has officially been established as a not for profit, independent company.

WRE was formed in 2014 by Anglian Water, alongside representatives from other water companies, the Environment Agency, local authorities, as well as the agricultural, energy, environmental and research sectors. The focus is simple – recognising the impact that climate change and population growth will continue to have on Eastern England’s finite water supply, combined with the need to enhance the environment in this region.

WRE is one of five regional water resource planning groups working as part of the Environment Agency’s development of a national framework for water resource management, but is the first to set itself up as an independent legal entity. Becoming an independent company marks a commitment by the Eastern regions most influential organisations to manage the region’s water resources together, through an impartial platform.

Dr Robin Price, Interim Managing Director for WRE said, “WRE is one of the most collaborative and ambitious projects of its kind. It draws together neighbouring water companies, the agricultural community, local authorities, the energy sector, environmental NGOs and regulators to plan together for the future management of water across Eastern England in the decades to come”.

The new company, Water Resources East (WRE) Limited, has been formed by a collaborative partnership comprising: Anglian Water; Affinity Water; Cambridge Water; Essex and Suffolk Water; Severn Trent; the National Farmers’ Union; RWE Generation; Lincolnshire County Council; Suffolk Growth Programme Board (on behalf of all Local Authorities in Suffolk) and Norfolk County Council who will collectively form a Board of Directors. The new Board of WRE, which is expected to grow over the next few months as other organisations join the company, will be supported and advised by a wider network of over 50 different organisations from a diverse group of sectors, including regulators.

The next phase of WRE’s work will focus on the delivery of pilot projects within water-stressed catchments in the region. These pilots will focus on the links between land management and water management and will seek to maximise and account for environmental and Natural Capital benefits. As part of one set of pilots, land owners will be encouraged to develop multi-sector water storage

reservoirs, capturing excess water from winter rainfall and floods. This water could then be used to benefit the whole regional economy to bolster the regions water supply, support agriculture, enhance fenland conservation and reduce flood risk. These new reservoirs will be supported by further interconnecting pipes to enable water to be moved around the region, irrespective of water company boundaries.

NFU National Water Resources Specialist Paul Hammett said: “The food and farming sector in the Eastern England makes a significant contribution to the region’s economy, and to the nation’s food supply.

“However, a secure supply of water is a vital ingredient for both food production and manufacturing. WRE will ensure that water for food isn’t overlooked as we tackle the challenge of managing water demand and supply for all.

“The NFU hopes that the successful delivery of local schemes, under this new phase of WRE, can be used as case studies to inspire farmers across the Eastern England to get involved with their own local ‘joined up’ water management projects.”

Peter Simpson, Chief Executive, Anglian Water said, “Eastern England is the driest region in the country and we are well prepared for dealing with dry spells and hot summers. Water companies like the five who are now part of WRE continue to invest in our long term planning, and ensuring our water resources are resilient and ready for the future. This is in conjunction with our on-going commitment to driving down leakage to world leading low levels, and helping our customers to use less water in their everyday lives.”

“While our commitment remains to continue finding new, innovative ways to improve the resilience of our water resources and enhance the environment, we also recognise we need the help of others who need water as much as we do. That’s what WRE is here to do. Bring everyone together to break down siloes, think outside the box and get projects off the ground that would not be otherwise possible. I’m delighted that WRE is now its own completely independent organisation, and I look forward to working as part of the wide partnership which has been created. Together, we’re ensuring long-term water availability for generations to come, whatever the weather.”

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Notes to Editors:

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