

Stronger, Greener, Healthier: Our plan for the North West

A summary of our Business Plan
for Lancashire
2025–30



Pictured: Blackpool, Lancashire

Introduction

Welcome to the summary of our Business Plan for Lancashire

The North West is an exciting and diverse region; it's where we live, work and play.

We've built a plan for the next five years which has been shaped by, and adapted to meet, the diverse needs of the region. Adopting this approach means we will deliver outcomes which are tailored for customers in the places where they live.

Because delivering locally is important to you and us, we've been working with stakeholders and customers to better understand the unique needs for each North West county so we develop plans that are more relatable to the communities we serve.

It's a hugely ambitious plan that will support 30,000 jobs across the region, and we've engaged with 95,000 people in Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire, to make sure we get it right, shaping our plans for each county to address the things that you've told us matter most. These include:

- Providing great quality water every time you turn on the tap
- Improving the region's natural environment and tackling storm overflows
- Doubling our financial support for those who need it, making sure nobody gets left behind
- Driving benefits for the North West's economy

In this document, we have summarised the challenges and opportunities in Lancashire. We hope that by setting out our plan this way, we make our investment programme and the benefits it delivers more meaningful to customers.

We call it place-based planning. It involves us working in partnership with other organisations to develop cost-effective investment and planning in local areas. This approach means we can identify the right solutions and develop tailored outcomes which deliver for local people and the needs of the environment.

At the same time as improving services and investing in the security of infrastructure to respond to the challenges of climate change and population growth, we are also able to deliver real opportunities for the North West too, a chance to drive inward investment, provide great quality skilled jobs and ignite a regional economy.

While we recognise that the plan necessitates an increase in bills, we also recognise the economic challenges facing our communities. That's why we're proposing an industry-leading support package of over £500 million, meaning that one in six customers will receive financial support so we reduce the risk of anyone being left behind by the costs of rising bills.

Now, more than ever, we need to rise to the challenge, deliver improved services for our customers, the environment and our communities in Lancashire. It matters to customers, to regulators, to shareholders and it matters to us, and we are determined to deliver the step change we all want to see. We look forward to the opportunity of delivering this ambitious plan.

Louise Beardmore
Chief Executive

Highlights from our ambitious plan

Supporting over 55,000 people who are struggling to pay their bills. Our support will double by 2030.

Reducing spills from 158 storm overflows and improving 35 kilometres of rivers.

Investing over £280 million to improve water quality at four shellfish and four bathing water sites in places such as Morecambe and Fleetwood.

Investing over £870 million to improve the river environment of Lancashire.

Employing 860 people across Lancashire. Our increased investment will create more green jobs.



Visit our microsite at
PR24.unitedutilities.com

Lancashire's unique characteristics

Lancashire's coastline and popular beaches mean that bathing water quality is a priority for both customers and visitors to the region. With multiple coastal towns and cities such as Blackpool, Morecambe and Southport relying on tourism-related revenues, it is important that we continue to invest and work with partners to ensure the right solutions to improve bathing water quality.

Lancashire is home to some of the region's most beautiful natural features. The county is carved by many rivers drained from the Pennines, including the Ribble, Wyre and Lune, all of which drain to the west of the county, and enter the Irish Sea. Protecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty of Lancashire remains a priority, as is ensuring damaged peatland is restored. We will work in partnership with environmental NGOs to deliver environmental benefits, and actively prevent the destruction of habitats.

Victorian sewer systems are particularly prevalent in the historic towns of East Lancashire, with higher proportions of sewer overflows. We're investing to reduce the number of storm overflow spills to improve water quality and amenity along the rivers Ribble, Lune and Wyre.

Lancashire



We support **55,300** customers through **affordability schemes** and **66,000** people with additional needs through Priority Services



Peatland in East Lancashire and the Pennines is an **important store of carbon** and critical for good water quality

Protecting our natural landscapes and **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty** from increasing threats from climate change including wildfires, flooding and drought



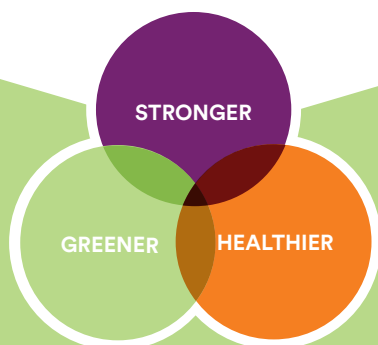
Storm overflow activations are a concern in Lancashire. We know it's important for us to **invest in reducing spills**, and we're bringing forward investment so we can start work on improving many of these sooner

Our priority is to provide a **sustainable supply of quality drinking water** that is resilient now and for future generations



Providing great water for a **stronger, greener and healthier** North West

Our plan protects the health and wellbeing of communities and the environment and underpins the economy, enabling sustainable growth.



The coastline is a dominant feature of this area, so **water quality** directly impacts amenity value and local economies



Partnership working with landowners, local authorities, NGOs and local communities

A plan that makes Lancashire Stronger, Greener, Healthier

STRONGER

Lancashire has a number of challenges and opportunities:

Affordability and supporting vulnerable customers:

There are a mix of socio-economic levels across Lancashire. It is important we make provision for those who may need more support.

Jobs and growth

There are pockets of significant growth in Lancashire, particularly around cities of Preston and Lancaster. Lancashire's economy is varied including agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, all of which rely on resilient water supplies.

To manage these challenges, we're:



Supporting **over 55,300 people** who are struggling to pay their bills, **doubling our support by 2030**, and helping **66,600 customers** with additional needs through Priority Services.



Employing more than **860 people** across Lancashire and increased future investment will create more green jobs.



Working with planners to **promote sustainable development** and ensure water needs are met.



A plan that makes Lancashire Stronger, Greener, Healthier

GREENER

Lancashire has a number of challenges and opportunities:

Protecting rivers and catchments:

Lancashire has a diverse geographical landscape. The west has low lying coastal and estuary landscapes, where tidal influences and urban areas contribute to surface water runoff. The uplands in the east have extensive areas of countryside and moorland with two designated areas of outstanding natural beauty: Forest of Bowland and Arndale and Silverdale.

Partnerships:

Lancashire has a history of innovative partnerships that deliver benefits across a range of challenges.

To manage these challenges, we're:



Investing over **£870 million** to improve the river environment of Lancashire, including protecting and improving **35km** of rivers.



Working in partnership with the Fylde Hub, Turning Tides, Ribble Rivers Trust, Wyre NFM, RSPB and many more Lancashire stakeholders to improve rivers and coasts. Across Lancashire, we are working with partners to manage catchments and restore peatlands over an area of **620 hectares**.



Removing **barriers to fish and eel migration** at Stocks reservoir and the Calder River intake.



Investing **£729 million** to reduce activations of **91 storm overflows**.

A plan that makes Lancashire Stronger, Greener, Healthier

HEALTHIER

Lancashire has a number of challenges and opportunities:

Sustainable water supplies:

Water sources in Lancashire are sensitive to compounds which affect the taste, smell and appearance of water.

Healthier coastlines:

The coastal waters of Lancashire are important for the economy, in particular tourism and fisheries.

Access and recreation

A mix of natural environments, including two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and traditional townscapes make Lancashire a popular tourism destination.

To manage these challenges, we're:



Continuing to provide **free access at nine sites** across Lancashire to deliver recreational benefits.



Investing **over £270 million** to deliver benefits at four sites for shellfish waters and four sites for bathing waters.



Investing to manage factors that can impact the taste, smell and appearance of water to **reduce the impacts on customers**.



Investing **over £1 billion** to improve the **Haweswater Aqueduct**, ensuring we can sustain resilient water supplies across the North West, including Lancashire, working in partnership with local stakeholders to minimise the disruption this programme could have on people and the environment.



Further information

We've been working with stakeholders and customers to develop our understanding of unique needs across the North West's five counties. This means we can develop plans that are more relatable to the communities we serve.



Visit our microsite at PR24.unitedutilities.com

Thank you . . .

We believe this plan reflects the priorities that customers and stakeholders have told us matter most to them. We are most grateful to people across Lancashire, who have given their time to provide us with their views and insight on the delivery of water and wastewater services across the county.

Listening to you isn't something we do just for our business plan – it's something we do all of the time. We have devoted a chapter of our business plan to explain how we gather your perspectives and opinions and we welcome ideas on how we can do this more effectively.

In November 2023, we are holding 'Your water, your say' sessions in each county to provide more details about our plan, in interactive meetings where the Chief Executive and her team will take questions from customers and stakeholders. Details can be found at unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/listening-to-our-customers/your-water-your-say

The water industry's economic regulator, Ofwat, will now examine our proposals and feed back to us in the middle of 2024, a process which is called a draft determination. This is an assessment of our business plan and offers a view on whether the plan meets regulatory requirements.



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Water for the North West