



13 October 2025

Richard Leonard MSP
Convener
Public Audit Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Scottish Water
Buchanan Gate Business Park
Cumbernauld Road, Stepps,
Glasgow, G33 6FB

W: www.scottishwater.co.uk

Via email to: ***publicaudit.committee@parliament.scot***

Dear Convener

Thank you for asking Scottish Water to respond to the recommendations in *Flooding in communities: Moving towards flood resilience*, the joint report from the Auditor General and Accounts Commission.

Scottish Water supports the recommendations in the Audit Scotland report, and is ready to work with Scottish Government, local authorities, SEPA and COSLA to take these forward.

As you know, flooding is a complex issue with responsibilities shared between a number of different bodies. Scottish Water has statutory responsibility to operate the public foul and combined sewer systems and manage problems caused by sewers either flooding or being affected by chokes and collapses. This includes the drainage of rainwater into the combined sewer system.

In addition to these responsibilities, Scottish Water is classed as a Responsible Authority under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, with a role to provide the understanding of risk of flooding from the sewer network and to work with partners to understand the interaction of river, surface water and sewer networks in catchments in Scotland.

The Scottish Government's National Flood Resilience Strategy, published in late 2024, has been helpful here, particularly the framing of flood resilience through the lens of climate adaptation. The shift in strategy to designing and supporting flood resilient places is also a positive change which can help to bring better, cheaper and lower carbon "upstream" solutions compared to trying to address matters at the end of the pipe. In this regard, Scottish Water is an active participant in the Flood Resilience Strategy Implementation Governance Group.

The approach set out in the National Flood Resilience Strategy aligns with our recently published [Long Term Strategy](#). This shows that without significant investment, and a change in approach to managing surface water, climate predictions suggest an increase of almost 60% in the number of homes and businesses at risk of sewer flooding in Scotland by 2050.

In the Long-Term Strategy we have set out objectives related to flooding, that include having no customers experience repeat sewer flooding in their homes by 2050 and accelerating our approach to place-based blue green infrastructure solutions to manage rainwater.

Managing rainfall differently in communities - for instance, utilising blue-green and nature-based solutions as well as creating space for water through natural systems - is key to ensuring cities are resilient to future rainfall.

It is important that communities and decision makers across Scotland think of our water catchments as connected systems from source to sea and for this to be reflected in how we plan, design and support flood resilient places as well as how we look at land management both in our urban and rural communities. The key challenge is working in partnership across multiple agencies, authorities, developers and communities as the Audit Scotland report notes.

There are some good examples of innovative solutions and partnership working that Scottish Water is engaged in delivering, we would want to see this list expand in future:

- St Mary's, Dundee: [St Mary's - Scottish Water](#) and [St Marys Drainage Strategy - Water Resilient Dundee](#)
- The Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership ([Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership \(MGSDP\) - MGSDP](#))
- Pilot projects in [Craigleith, Edinburgh](#) and [Prestwick](#) to reduce rain water entering into the wider sewer system by using rain gardens, trees and permeable paving.

I hope this letter is helpful in providing some detail on these areas of interest for the Committee. If you would like any more information, please let us know.

Yours sincerely



Alex Plant
Chief Executive
Scottish Water