

Statement provided by Vicky Garner 19th April 2023

In terms of the spill data reported, we are investigating the monitor at the Uplyme treatment works and reviewing the configuration of the site as we consider that this may be inflating the spill numbers. In addition, we are also trialling an intervention at the storm tank which should reduce the number of spills to the environment. Work on this will begin next week.

Importantly, the six storm overflow assets which could potentially impact the Lim have been identified for improvements. In total, our business plan has identified c. £20m to invest in storm overflows in the Lyme Regis catchment between 2025 – 2030.

It is important to note that there is a wide range of influences which affect river water quality, including agricultural and urban run-off - less than 20% is within the direct control of water companies. We recognise that to improve the quality of our rivers, we all need to play our part.

South West Water has been working closely with the River Lim Action Group, the Town Council, Dorset Council and the Environment Agency to understand potential issues with the network in the area and identify misconnections (illegal connections to our surface water network) in the town. We have also been carrying out kitchen audits on businesses to identify where businesses may be disposing of fats, oils and greases incorrectly, which can lead to blockages on the network.

A spokesperson for South West Water, said: “South West Water’s largest environmental investment programme in 15 years, is now well underway, focused on delivering benefits for customers, communities and the environment. Last April we launched WaterFit to go further and faster. We are investing £330 million in our wastewater network to dramatically reduce our use of storm overflows as part of our plans to reduce our impact on rivers by one-third by 2025, as we look to ensure we are not the reason for any river failing to meet ecological standards by 2030.”

Additional background

Last month, we launched WaterFit Live, ahead of this year’s bathing season. Customers and visitors can go online to find out more and through Your Beach, Your Say, Our Investment, help shape where we invest next.

South West Water plans on expanding WaterFit Live so that it also covers river water quality later this year. The River Lim is not a designated bathing water and there are currently no designated bathing rivers in the region - we are working on pilots for both the rivers Dart and Tavy to learn what it will take to achieve this.