
Main Estimates memorandum (2021-22): Water Services Regulation Authority

1 Overview

1.1 Objectives

The Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) support the regulation of the water industry in England and Wales as principally set out in the Water Industry Act 1991, Water Act 2003, and Water Act 2014. Ofwat is a competition authority principally under the Competition Act 1998 and the Enterprise Act 2002 relating to commercial activities connected with water or sewerage services in England and Wales. These are continuing functions from previous years and no new functions have been added.

Ofwat is funded through licence fees received from the water and sewerage companies and we consult annually in our Forward Programme with our stakeholders on our budgets for the upcoming year.

1.2 Spending controls

Ofwat's net spending is broken down into a several different spending totals, for which Parliament's approval is sought.

The spending totals which Parliament votes are:

- Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (“**Resource DEL**”): - a net limit comprising day-to-day running costs, less income from licence fees
- Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (“**Capital DEL**”): - investment in capital equipment such as ICT hardware

In addition, Parliament votes a net cash requirement, designed to cover the elements of the above budgets which require Ofwat to pay out cash in year.

1.3 Comparison of net spending totals sought

The table below shows how the net spending totals sought for Ofwat compares with last year:

Spending total Amounts sought this year (Main Estimate 2021-22)		Compared to final budget last year (Supplementary Estimate 2020-21)			Compared to original budget last year (Main Estimate 2020-21)	
	£ m	£ m	%	£ m	%	
Resource DEL	0.15	0.15	0%	0.15	0%	
Capital DEL	0.6	0.15	300%	0.15	300%	

A breakdown of spending and income within the net total is shown in section 2.1.

1.4 Key drivers of spending changes since last year

The net Resource DEL has not changed significantly from last year.

Within this, expected licence income, and the gross expenditure this covers, are both expected to increase from £31.4m to £31.8m (1.3%). This modest increase will fund the delivery of our strategy plus the water sector green recovery process and additional COVID work.

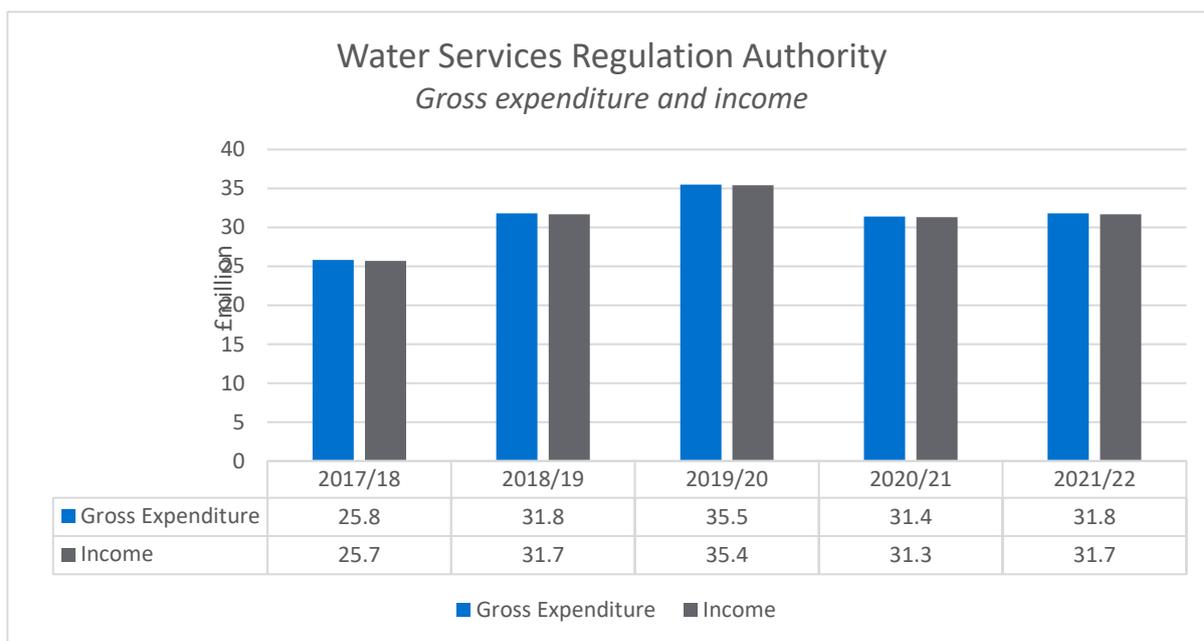
The net capital DEL proposed has increased by 300% from last year. The £0.6 million capital budget this year is an allowance for predominantly IT hardware upgrades and investment which previously would have been RDEL expenditure.

1.5 New policies and programmes

The regulator's strategy is attached [here](#), and also the [2021-22 Forward Programme](#).

1.6 Spending and income trends

The charts below show overall resource DEL spending and income trends for the last five years, plans presented in Estimates for 2021-22, and current future spending plans. The spike in 2019/20 reflects the peak of work around setting a new price control, which the regulator does every 5 years. Another key change since 2017/18 (last normal year) is RAPID (Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development) where extra funding was agreed by HMT following a separate business case.



1.7 Administration costs and efficiency plans

	Spending total Amounts sought this year (Main Estimate 2021-22)		Compared to final budget last year (Supplementary Estimate 2020-21)		Compared to original budget last year (Main Estimate 2020-21)	
	£ m	£ m	£ m	%	£ m	%
Administration costs	0.15	0.15	0.15	0%	0.15	0%

The £0.15m administration budget related to the part of the pension costs of the former Directors General of the Office of Water Services ('Directors General') which cannot be charged to the water industry as it relates to their services with other government departments.

1.8 Funding: Spending Review and Budgets

The regulator received no material funding through the last Spending Review. Expenditure is largely funded through:

- Income generated from fees levied on water and/ or sewerage companies and is subject to cost control.
- CDEL increase agreed at SR20 is £0.45m (from £0.15m to £0.6m) as detailed in sections 1.3 and 1.4.

1.9 Other funding announcements

No funding announcements in relation to Ofwat's budget were made in the year.

2 Spending and income detail

2.1 Explanations of changes in spending and income

Resource DEL

The table below shows how spending plans for Resource DEL compare with last year.

	Resource	DEL	Change from last year		Explanation for change
	This year (2021-22 main Estimates budget sought)	Last year (2020-21 Supp Estimates budget approved)			
	£m	£m	£m	%	
Gross expenditure	31.8	31.4	0.4	1.3%	Note 1
Fees from licences	31.7	31.3	0.4	1.3%	Note 1
Net expenditure	0.1	0.1	0	0.0%	

Note 1. Gross expenditure is increasing to fund the delivery of our strategy plus green recovery bids and additional COVID work.

2.3 Ring fenced budgets

Within the totals, the following elements are ring fenced i.e. savings in these budgets may not be used to fund pressures on other budgets

Ringfenced budgets Amounts sought this year (main Estimate 2021-22)	Compared to final budget last year (Supplementary Estimate 2020-21)			Compared to original budget last year (Main Estimate 2020-21)	
	£ m	£ m	%	£ m	%
Depreciation	0.31	0.36	0	0	0

Note – depreciation was omitted from the 2020-21 Main Estimates submission, and then correctly included in the 2020-21 Supplementary Estimate.

2.4 Changes to contingent liabilities

Ofwat does not have any contingent liabilities

3. Priorities and performance

3.1 Measures of performance against each priority

The regulator's Forward Programme (see [Ofwat 2021-22 Forward Programme](#)) sets out the following high-level objectives, and measures of performance, for the regulator for the current financial year.

3.4 Major projects

The Regulator has not under taken any major capital projects.

4. Other information

4.1 Additional specific information required by the select committee

No additional information has been requested by the Committee

5. Accounting Officer Approval

This memorandum has been prepared according to the requirements and guidance set out by HM Treasury and the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit, available on the Scrutiny Unit website.

The information in this Estimates Memorandum has been approved by myself as Departmental Accounting Officer.

David Black
Accounting Officer
Water Services Regulation Authority
14 April 2021