

Wessex Water

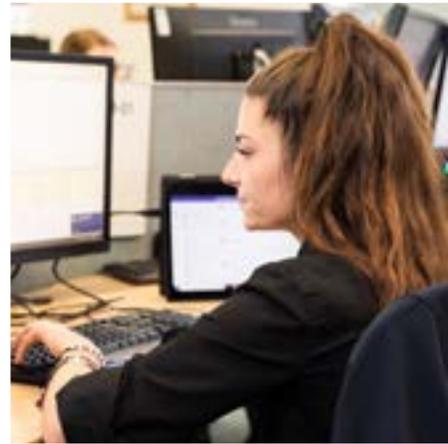
Open data strategy



Wessex Water
YTL GROUP

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Foreword

There are significant benefits for our business, the water industry stakeholders and in particular customers, of having a truly open data culture.

Opening data creates greater trust and transparency. It drives innovation and improvements to services that benefit customers. Five years ago, we launched Wessex Water Marketplace as we knew we needed to reach out to wider markets to help us deliver a higher level of performance.

We didn't know then what a success Marketplace would be.

Our partnership with StormHarvester is a great example of how the opening of data can be married with third-party technology/skills. StormHarvester has provided additional insight into the sewer network and prevented more than 80 potential blockages in the first year. It has now been rolled out to several other water companies.



Ruth Jefferson

Chief Compliance Officer
Wessex Water Services Limited.

Being a member of the cross industry open data initiative Stream has enabled us to work collaboratively towards something that is transformational and demonstrates the significant benefits of working together.

We continue to share our lessons learned from the Wessex Water Marketplace such as having the correct governance structures in place. Context of data is just as important as the data itself and perhaps most importantly being brave and pushing new boundaries on what can be shared.

We know there is lots more to do but we're excited to continue this journey. Harnessing the power of data underpins our business strategy to deliver for our customers and the environment.

We will continue to champion open data and work as a committed member of Stream to support wider societal aims.

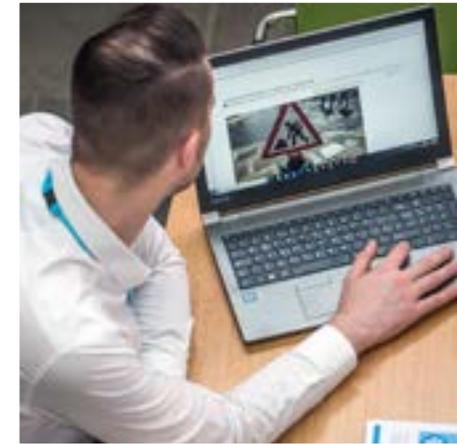
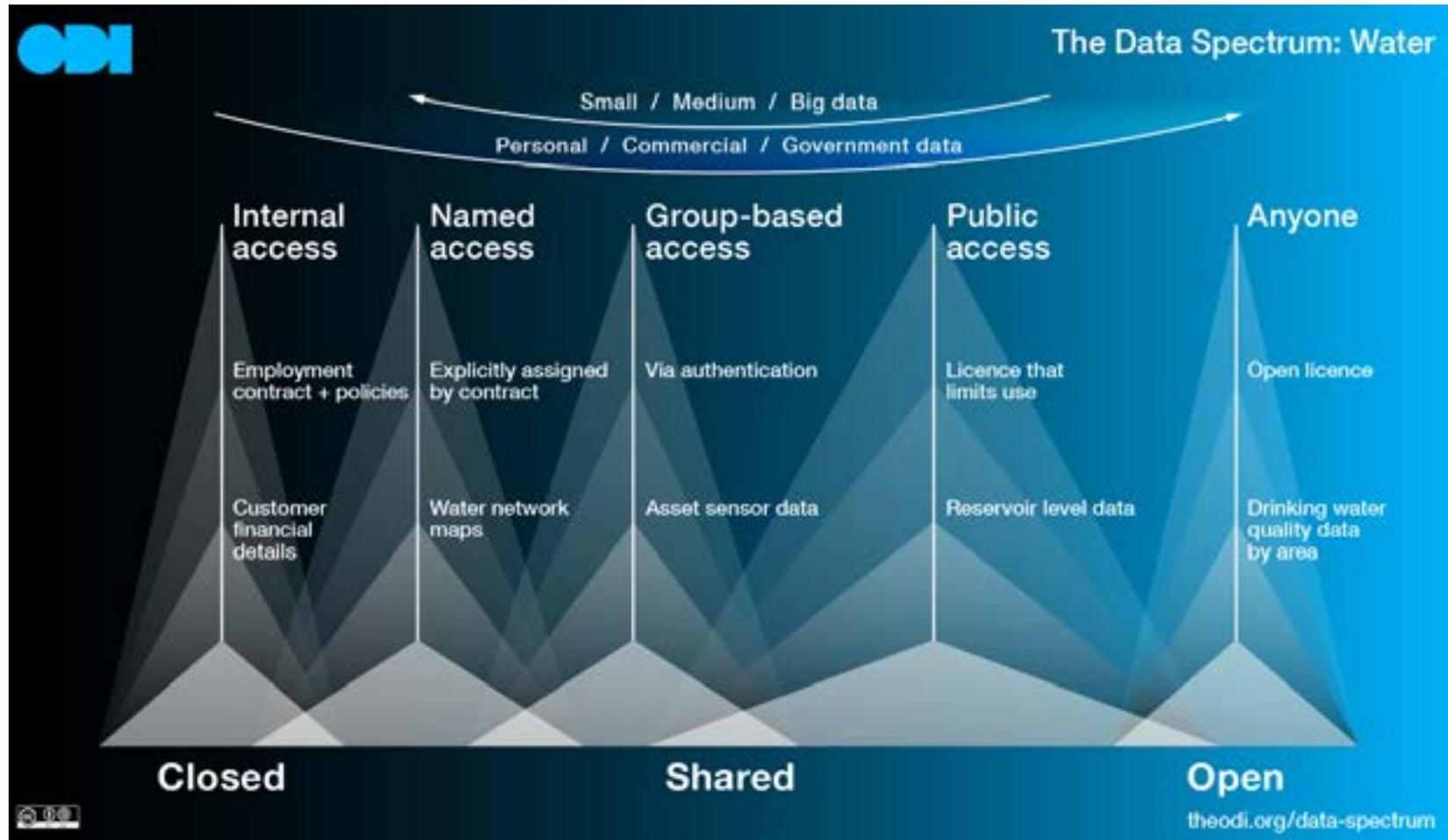


Wessex Water open data strategy

What is open data?

Open data is data that anyone can access, use, and share.¹ Open data is not all data. Data sharing can be viewed as a scale or spectrum, with closed data at one end and open data at the other. Closed data is accessible only within the organisation in which it is collected, for example customer and employee data. Some of these data are further

protected as it is confidential. In the middle is 'shared' data - data that is shared between two or more organisations for a specific purpose but cannot be accessed more widely in its raw form. This strategy focuses on open data.



1 What is open data? (The ODI)

Our open data vision and strategy

Our vision is that so far as possible, all our data should be open. We will be transparent with the reasons of confidentiality or sensitivity if we cannot make data open. We will demonstrate leadership by providing transparent contextual information suitable for our data ecosystem and support users in using the datasets we open.

At Wessex Water, we are demonstrating our commitment to making data open and have vital experience of the potential challenges and benefits of publishing data openly. We are confident we can demonstrate continued progress in delivering open data within our organisation and positively influence the evolution of open data across the water industry.

This strategy describes how our foundation and experience in open data can be cultivated to achieve maturity. The strategy, and the supporting tools and processes which ensure open data are delivered, will be regularly reviewed by our Open Data Champion. We will ensure our open data policy is aligned with our company goals and wider data management policy. We are committed to evaluating the success of our openly published data and their delivery to data re-users.



Our open data commitments

In support of our open data vision and aim, we make four open data commitments. Making progress in these areas will ensure maturity in open data. We commit to:

Engaging and supporting our data community to bring us closer to our customers

Ensuring our customers and communities can get maximum value out of the value of our data is vital. We will ensure published data are easy to find, relevant, well described and documented, in an appropriate format with licences. We will establish feedback channels for our network of data re-users to engage with us on what we publish and how.

We are committed to testing this strategy with our customers and listening to the data they are most excited to have open.

Our internally hosted Marketplace website will continue to be our home for open data. Where datasets are hosted on another part of the wider Wessex Water website, or another data source, we will provide a link to the data.

We will ensure all our datasets meet the industry standard. This includes adding open data licences to existing datasets and ensuring files are machine readable and in a suitable file format for wide re-use.

We will ensure the data has clear and concise documentation to support end users of the data.

We will grow our open data network and actively communicate our open data progress to ensure our community is informed and engaged.

We will establish feedback loops and draw on information from our data community and customers on how to prioritise data for publication, where we do well, and how our approaches can be improved to make our data easier to use and understand.

Strengthening our data processes to ensure a consistent approach

The open data landscape is changing. The processes we follow to ensure the balance of security and risk with openness and opportunity must equally evolve. To accelerate our transformation, we will annually review our progress in open data maturity and evolve the supporting processes and documentation to move up the maturity scale.

Our open data experience has been primarily driven by company and industry challenges and improving transparency around our reported business performance. Through these publications, we have recognised the value of opening our data and established repeatable and defined processes for making data available.

We have established approaches for data quality and data validation. Our data quality principles consider the diverse aspects of data quality which include having appropriate systems, processes, and practices to manage accuracy, completeness, and reliability.

To deliver our open data vision of our data being as open so far as possible, we will strengthen our guidance and processes to confidently assess whether data can and should be shared openly.

When data is shared, we will use a standard approach to develop rich and relevant contextual information, particularly for complex datasets. We will always share supporting information that explains the data set, from creation to sharing, the frequency of data collection and publication and any known or potential errors in the dataset.



Leadership and collaboration - treating our data as a valuable asset

We will continue engagement and openness with water industry partners on making common datasets available. We are also committed to using our experience and learnings to positively impact our customers, our industry partners and more widely. We fully support the Stream philosophy that the open data journey is better together, and we are happy to share for better outcomes.

We are an engaged and active Stream member. In December 2023, we were one of six companies to publish domestic water quality data as part of the first collaborative data releases. We will continue to contribute to meaningful collaboration with Stream and the wider water industry to deliver on open data.

We were also invited to become a founding member of Stream's Centre of Expertise to accelerate learning and change in open data. We have and will continue to share our learnings and experience to benefit the partners, the wider industry and our communities and environment.

Our open data champion will provide strategic oversight on our open data strategy and commitments. We will continue to engage with colleagues on our open data vision, commitments and the benefits we have seen from publishing our data.

We will ensure our staff are confident about their role in the opening of data. The starting point for this is ensuring we have clear and robust processes for making data available and appropriate guidance to achieve open data.

Restoring trust through open data

We will continue to make new datasets open and deliver our commitments on updating existing datasets. We will launch new challenges, to innovatively solve issues in our business, industry, and environments, and also be braver by publishing datasets that have no immediate, obvious use case.

We will review the datasets requested under Environmental Information Requests for common themes and consider opportunities to increase the richness of our annual reporting data.

We will launch new Marketplace challenges to innovatively solve issues in our business, industry, and environments. Where appropriate, these will be supported with open data. We will share the outcomes of our challenges, demonstrating the value of opening our data in identifying solutions.

As we progress our digital transformation, we will ensure the technology used to supply our data community with information is safe and reliable for data access.



Our open data journey; embracing change

Open data is not new to us at Wessex Water. Our progress in creating a data-focussed work culture, data platforms and architecture, and knowledge sharing, and external support were acknowledged in an industry-wide open data progress assessment.²

- Our Coastwatch app was an industry first in 2012 and was expanded to include amenity waters in 2022.
- We have always had a proactive and positive approach to responding to Environmental Information Requests.
- Our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans share our storm overflow events data and go beyond regulatory requirements.
- Our Marketplace platform has shared data since 2019 on business challenges and several wider data sets.

- We are a member of Stream, a sector-wide initiative to efficiently, innovatively, and transparently “unlock the potential of water data to benefit customers, society and the environment”.

Our experience to date of voluntarily opening data has shown the perceived risks, such as highlighting compliance failures or publishing datasets less than 100% perfect, have been negligible.

There have been no negative reputational impacts from voluntary open data, and queries have focused on data sets where we are proactively engaging with the supply chain through Marketplace challenges.

How does this fit with our wider data strategy?

This open data strategy supports the principles and long terms goals of our wider data strategy, driving the culture and behaviours to enable trust and transparency, ownership, collaborative working and sharing best practice across the water industry.

The wider data strategy ensures the business’ data is treated as a corporate asset by managing and using the data, defining goals and objectives for effective and efficient data usage across departments and projects.

Our aim is for opening data to align and follow on from our data projects rather than create a separate workstream. This is not to say that there will not be specific cases where an open data approach is accelerated.

The open data strategy is also complementary to our internal information management framework and 10 information vision principles.

To align with our business strategy, our open data strategy should provide clear value to the organisation through improved customers service, enhanced environment whilst meeting regulatory expectations.



How open data supports our business

Opening areas of our data has and will continue to bring us many business benefits.

- It increases the trust and transparency with our customers and regulators, with them able to see the same information we have.
- It allows the supply chain to understand the true structure and quality of operational data, allowing them to test and improve the products they sell us, and potentially identify innovations to solve our challenges.

- It provides academia with a rich dataset from which to explore practical applications of theoretical models, and for students investigating projects.
- It is also giving our customers and other interested parties the opportunity to discover what we do and aligns with our business strategy and business vision to provide outstanding water and environmental services.

Our open data road map

By the end of 2024:

Engaging and supporting our data community to bring us closer to our customers

- We will ensure all our Marketplace datasets are open and meeting industry standards.
- We will maintain a regular channel of communication with our data community.
- We will enhance our feedback mechanism for our open data publications.

Strengthening our data processes to ensure a consistent approach

- We will review and update our data publication guidance and procedures.
- We will develop standard guidance for publishing contextual information alongside our datasets.

Leadership and collaboration - treating our data as a valuable asset

- We will contribute to the publication of high-value datasets through Stream.
- We will share our learnings and experience in open data publication with the wider industry.
- We will create an internal information hub to advise, engage and support colleagues in open data initiatives and approaches.
- We will annually report our progress and next steps to the Executive team.

Restoring trust through open data

- We will fully contribute to Stream including support for other members.
- We will continue to launch Marketplace datasets linked to specific challenges.
- We will fulfil our commitment to annually update all relevant existing open datasets.





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