Wonderful Windermere Performance Commitment

Response to methodology consultation feedback

August 2025

United Utilities

Water for the North West

Contents

Introduction

Through the Wonderful Windermere performance commitment (PC), UUW is seeking to drive improvements related to phosphorus removal in Windermere. We aim to do this through a range of actions to improve the performance of privately owned assets including septic tanks, package plants and catchment land that does not belong to United Utilities.

Working with communities we will deliver a range of interventions that will reduce phosphorous load into the lake and support private customers in making these changes. This is the first time an initiative like this has been developed in the sector, and we have consulted to ensure there is clarity and transparency on how the scheme will work.

In June 2025 we launched a consultation to gather stakeholder feedback on four key areas of the methodology including: the sources of phosphorous to be considered for interventions, sampling of interventions, modelling of interventions, and the governance regime.

We received responses from six organisations and thank the consultees for their feedback and responses provided. This document summarises the key elements of the responses received and the amendments that have been made to the draft methodology as a result. Where the respondent has given consent to publish their response in full, we have published this on our website, alongside this consultation feedback document.

A revised draft methodology document was shared with Ofwat and the Environment Agency on 11 July 2025. Once finalised, the methodology will be used to deliver the PC. We look forward to continued engagement with stakeholders throughout this process to deliver environmental benefits for Windermere.

1. Question 1

Intervention sources (Section 5, Table 4, Section 7.2, Section 7.3): The Wonderful Windermere PC identifies the following sources of phosphorus to reduce nutrient input: Private WwTWs, Domestic Septic Tanks, Catchment farmland, and 'Other' catchment land.

- **Are there any specific interventions that you wish to be considered to support nutrient reduction from these sources?**
- **Alternatively, are you aware of any additional sources of nutrient inputs that you think should be included?**

1.1 Consultee Responses

Consultee	Response
UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH)	You seem to be very focussed on 'end of pipe' solutions, have you given any thought to reductions in the sources of P before they enter the sewage systems or farmland? e.g. feeding regimes, P free products, removal/ recycling of slurry off catchment. You are not considering targeting legacy nutrients in this approach i.e. those stored and potentially released from sediments and soils.
Impact & Lake District Country Hotels	Since the early 90s, a sewage pipe from Troutbeck Bridge through to Low Wood or Ambleside has been promised. The number of properties along this stretch of road are significant and a pipe would be the most effective way to halt most phosphorus leakage into the Lake. With the lack of prospect for this happening, we have upgraded all three of our hotels from septic tanks to fully operational package treatment plants. Even so, a sewer pipe would be the best solution for all properties along this stretch of road.
Save Windermere	We urge Ofwat to take the following actions before accepting any aspect of the proposed BPC: Provide a clear framework for landowner compensation, ensuring any payments for land-based interventions are fair, transparent, and aligned with existing DEFRA schemes such as CS, ES, and SFI. No explanation of how reductions from third-party assets will be achieved. Usage of ambiguous terms such as *"above and beyond legal requirements,"* which remain undefined in operational terms, particularly given variability in private treatment performance and fluctuating pollutant loads at individual sites. In practice, a site may be non-compliant during one inspection and compliant the next, undermining UU's preferred approach. Without a clearly defined framework for what constitutes *"above baseline"* or *"above statutory obligations,"* there is a real risk that UU could claim credit for simply meeting existing legal requirements. Ambiguity around UU's statement that farm interventions should occur in the *"same geographical location, preferably upstream"* of Windermere; this should be clearly defined as a mandatory requirement, in order to ensure all interventions take place upstream to ensure effectiveness and prevent implementation from occurring outside of the Windermere catchment. There also appears to be an assumption by United Utilities that the Environment Agency is currently undertaking full compliance monitoring for all 1,500 to 2,000 private wastewater systems in the catchment. However, only a small proportion, fewer than 100, actually hold discharge permits, and that no such large-scale compliance assessment is underway. As a result, the vast majority of these systems will not have undergone any baseline assessment to determine whether they are operating in accordance with existing legal requirements.
South Cumbria Rivers Trust	SCRT would welcome the opportunity to sample and measure other key nutrients directly impacting water quality in the Windermere catchment. Section 7.1.1 Farmscoper Methodology at Farm Level, references Nitrate Vulnerable Zones for assessing the compliance of agricultural assets. Where possible, sampling and/or modelling should include nitrates, with interventions attempting to reduce these where possible. 'Other' catchment land could include highways and forestry. Sampling of chemicals known to impact water quality from such assets should be sampled where possible, including nitrogen, ammonium, heavy metals, microplastics and hydrocarbons.

Consultee	Response
Love Windermere Partnership	The Love Windermere Partnership, through the science, data and evidence captured over decades and compiled within the report 'A Changing Windermere' agree that these are the primary sources of nutrient input to Windermere. A sub-catchment nutrient budget, as operated in places such as Lake Champlain, Canada and Loch Neagh, Northern Ireland, could be used to identify and prioritise locations for interventions. The Partnership believes that within 'other' catchment land, interventions that reduce surface water run-off could be considered under this bespoke performance commitment. We are keen to learn from projects such as the Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience project at Grasmere to see how Natural Flood Management interventions can deliver water quality outcomes and believe that the bespoke performance commitment could provide additionality to 'flood risk management' projects to deliver additional or secondary water quality outcomes such as Phosphorus removal. 'Other' catchment land could also include highways and forestry. The sampling of chemicals known to impact water quality from such assets would, where possible, be welcomed, including nitrogen, ammonium, heavy metals, microplastics and hydrocarbons. While the Partnership very much support the principle that Wonderful Windermere should not be used to bring sites into compliance, we feel that wherever possible and provided a robust programme of work is in place to bring a site back into compliance, the Wonderful Windermere elements of additionality could and should be 'twin tracked'. This would further enable blended funding options. Whilst recognising the limitations on the scope of the bespoke performance commitment with the focus being on phosphorus reduction, any opportunities to measure other key nutrients directly impacting water quality in the Windermere catchment would be welcomed. Section 7.1.1 Farmscoper Methodology at Farm Level, references Nitrate Vulnerable Zones for assessing the compliance of agricultural assets., sampling and/or modelling to include nitrates, with interventions to potentially reduce these, would be beneficial.
Consultee 6	Having read the Wonderful Windermere Methodology, I understand that exclusions include land owned by United Utilities. I am unsure of exact ownership within the Windermere Catchment, but if UU own land within this boundary, then does it not make sense for the interventions to apply to these owned areas as well - especially given the whole catchment approach. - The definition of 'Agricultural Catchment' does not as far as I can see include Forestry and Woodland. There are areas within the catchment that include commercial forestry operation and indeed larger areas of important amenity woodland. These areas should be considered separately with their own intervention. The management of Forestry operations is entirely different to that of agricultural, but equally as important.

1.2 UUW Response

1.2.1 Amendments to methodology

Options available to asset owners

UUW has updated section 8.1 in the methodology to ensure that asset owners understand that other options are available to improve or upgrade their wastewater collection and treatment facilities, not just interventions delivered through this PC.

- **Section 8.1** now states "UUW will inform asset owners of the range of options available to address their sewerage, including First time sewage under section 101a of the Water Industry Act 1991 (S.101A). UUW will proceed with interventions as part of the Wonderful Windermere PC once confirmed that either S.101A is not the preferred choice of the asset owner or is not viable."

Landowner Compensation

UUW received a response that payments for land based interventions should be aligned with existing Defra payment schemes, such as Countryside Stewardship, Environmental Stewardship and Sustainable Farming Incentive.

UUW is not proposing to make payments to landowners for land based interventions as part of this PC. Any interventions on catchment land will be delivered as part of the PC, rather than paying land owners to make the interventions.

- **Section 7.1.1** in the methodology now states "UUW will make farmers aware that there are potential agri-environmental schemes that could deliver the same interventions as this PC before starting any intervention."

How reductions from third party assets will be achieved
UUW has outlined two intervention types on Septic tanks and Private Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs) that are likely to be deployed through this Performance Commitment.

- **Section 5** in the methodology now gives details on two specific intervention types that are likely to be deployed: FujiClean and adsorptive media. Section 5 also states that "UUW will also consider new, innovative solutions where these are suitable, such as biological-based solutions and integrated constructed wetlands".

Examples of future areas of focus
In the methodology, UUW has included forestry land and highways as potential examples of future areas of focus when looking beyond agricultural catchment land intervention.

- **Section 7.3** states "Where an intervention can be implemented on non-agricultural land, such as but not limited to forestry land"
- **Section 7.3.2** states "However, if over the 2025-30 period technologies or novel methods emerge that would support additional phosphorus removal (for example, but not limited to, highways), UUW would look to work in conjunction with the EA to revise the performance commitment methodology to reflect these opportunities".

1.2.2 Clarification of existing methodology

Above and beyond legal requirements
The term "above and beyond the legal requirement" was used in the draft methodology to describe how phosphorous removal interventions would only be delivered at locations that are already meeting their legal obligations. In other words, no interventions will be delivered under the PC to improve an asset which is not currently meeting its legal requirements.

In the methodology UUW states that the legal standards that would need to be met are:

- General Binding Rules - these apply to private septic tanks or small sewage treatment plants that discharge to ground
- Environment Permits these apply to private treatment facilities such as some septic tanks and private treatment plants
- Farming Rules for Water for farm interventions.

The Environment Agency is the statutory authority with responsibility for assessing and advising on compliance and enforcing these standards. As such, the Environment Agency will confirm the compliance of an asset against the standards set out in the General Binding Rules (for assets without an environmental permit), or against its environmental permit if it is a permitted asset. The assessment of whether a farm meets its legal requirements will also be made by the Environment Agency. An intervention will only be delivered where the Environment Agency confirms the legal requirements are already being met. This will ensure that further improvements will be an enhancement on the legal requirement.

Geographical Location
As outlined in **Section 4** of the methodology document, interventions will apply to the Windermere catchment. UUW is committed to ensuring that interventions will only be delivered upstream of the River Leven and directly benefitting Windermere.

We note comments have been received regarding ownership of land in the catchment. For clarification UUW does not own any land in the catchment outside our site boundaries, nor does this PC apply to any assets owned by UUW in the catchment.

1.2.3 Acknowledgement of additional feedback

We recognise that we have received feedback to this question regarding sampling and modelling. Please note that this has been covered extensively in our response to questions 2 and 3.

We note feedback from consultees in relation to considering wider aspects of source identification, such as development of a nutrient budget for Windermere and addressing legacy inputs. The scope of the PC and methodology is directly related to phosphorus reduction from third party assets and sources attributed to this. However, UUW remains committed to looking at developing future opportunities for the catchment and working in partnership with other to progress opportunities outside of the scope of this PC.

2. Question 2

Sampling (Section 6.1, Section 7.3.1): UUW has put forward a comprehensive sampling regime (Table 1) as part of the methodology to ensure phosphorus loads are representative. Do you think the proposed sampling regime is suitable for each source of phosphorus?

2.1 Consultee Responses

Consultee	Response
UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH)	I think you need at least 1 year of 'before' and 1 year 'after' intervention monitoring, so that you can adequately represent the changing loads on the system and evaluate the effectiveness of measures. Seasonal patterns in visitor numbers, farming practices and weather will be missed otherwise.
Impact & Lake District Country Hotels	No response provided.
Save Windermere	Reliance on modelled reductions where sampling is "not possible due to access, safety, or discharge frequency limitations," creating scope for manipulation. Undefined agricultural sampling strategies, deferring detail to EA and Love Windermere governance groups ("each catchment is different… the exact details of the sampling required will be agreed as necessary with EA and the Love Windermere governance group…"). Acknowledgement that pre-intervention sampling in 2025 and 2026 is already unrepresentative due to regulatory delays. As a result, early data collection will rely entirely on assumption-based modelling rather than real-world measurements, undermining the credibility of the entire baseline, and rendering any future claims of improvement unverifiable and vulnerable to manipulation. Spot sampling poses a significant data representation risk, with early years relying on just 3–12 samples per intervention and reductions permitted if results "align" with predictions. Conclusions will be drawn from small sample sizes against modelled baselines, introducing high error margins and cluster bias. UU also refers to including varying through-flow rates but provides no detail on how this will be achieved. Sample analysis and interpretation will be carried out by UU itself, despite ongoing concerns about the reliability of Operator Self Monitoring data at its sites – this is inappropriate without independent verification. While we welcome the increase to a minimum of 12 pre- and post-intervention samples, this is still not sufficient, and the methodology still permits defaulting to assumed phosphorus loads and removal rates where sampling is deemed unfeasible. This is clearly inadequate for determining loading on a localised level with any real confidence. The lack of a clearly defined threshold for what constitutes an inability to sample introduces a significant discretionary loophole, which is set to be governed by either Love Windermere or an independent assurer appointed by United Utilities or Love Windermere, with no clarity on who is funding the appointment. In practice, this could lead to widespread use of assumed values that do not reflect the variability in occupancy, design, condition, or function of individual systems. It has also been stated to me by United Utilities that septic tanks discharging into a leach field will have phosphorus reductions determined by sampling the river after uptake from the land. This directly contradicts the justification provided for not sampling land-based agricultural interventions, where it is claimed that changes cannot be reliably detected in the watercourse. In addition, reliance on spot sampling as the primary data collection method is not robust. It fails to account for seasonal, diurnal and behavioural variability in discharges, making it an inherently weak basis for calculating annual phosphorus removal. Our recommendation, which was raised directly with Louise Beardmore, suggested that a small number of representative case study areas be selected

Consultee	Response
	for real-time or high-frequency sampling regimes far exceeding 12 samples per year. This has not been incorporated or substantively addressed.
South Cumbria Rivers Trust	No response provided.
Love Windermere Partnership	We are satisfied with the sampling regime proposed in Table 1 of the methodology. We are confident that working through the expertise contained across public, private and third sector organisations represented in the sewage and land-use workstreams of Love Windermere, the regime can be monitored in practice and reviewed with any changes agreed with the Environment Agency.
Consultee 6	There needs to be a very sensitive approach to the regime of sampling on the 'Agricultural Catchment', especially with EA involvement. To engage with occupants of the land and landowners, an approach with EA representatives may be met with trepidation. It's important this is considered as a whole catchment approach and that the occupants and landowners are fully briefed on this, rather than met with a what could be received as a singling out approach to land management and farm practice. If these initial concerns are dealt with and managed well by the EA, then I am sure advice and interventions to improve a whole catchment approach will be welcomed by those who farm and own land within it. Use the knowledge of those who farm the land for data as part of the interventions. No body knows the land and water flow better than those who occupy and farm it. Use their knowledge and gain their trust.

2.2 UUW Response

2.2.1 Amendments to methodology

Sampling requirements

UUW has updated **Table 1 in the methodology** to increase the number of samples required for interventions on Septic Tanks and Private Wastewater Treatment Works in 2025, 2026 and 2029.

- For pre-intervention sampling in 2025 and 2026, the sampling requirements has changed from "1 per month from when the intervention is identified and confirmed until the delivery of the Intervention" to "12 samples from when the intervention is confirmed until the delivery of the intervention. This will be over a minimum of 2 weeks".
- For post-intervention sampling in 2025 and 2026, sampling requirements has changed from "3 samples spread over 2 months to avoid cluster sampling" to "12 samples, with samples to be spread to avoid cluster sampling. This will be over a minimum of 2 weeks".
- Post-intervention sampling requirements in 2029 has also been amended to match the change made to the 2025 and 2026 post intervention sampling requirements above. 12 post intervention samples will be taken, but the samples will be over a shorter period of time to enable UUW to claim output in year 5 (by 31 December 2029).

Introduction of an independent assurer

UUW has updated the methodology to introduce an independent assurer who will be appointed to provide external security of the PC and will sit outside the Love Windermere partnership.

- **Section 9.1** the methodology outlines the independent assurer's responsibilities and states "The role of the independent assurer will be to provide external scrutiny of the PC and an independent view to the governance group to ensure its governance of the PC is robust and supported by evidence.".

The position of independent assurer will be advertised to encourage a wide pool of candidates to apply, and a recruitment process will be undertaken by Love Windermere to select the independent assurer. United Utilities will fund the role of independent assurer, but UUW will not be part of the selection process, to ensure the successful candidate is independent. No funding will be given by UUW to Love Windermere or any of its partner members as part of the appointment of the independent assurer.

Clarification of basis of removal
UUW has provided additional information for the use of the 65% removal rate.

Section 5 in the methodology states United Utilities is likely, but is not limited, to deploy two intervention types on septic tanks and private Wastewater Treatment Works. The two interventions that are likely to be deployed are FujiClean and adsorptive media:

- "In domestic applications, the system [FujiClean] typically removes 70% of phosphorus on average, with potential to achieve up to 90%, depending on influent conditions. This removal rate has been supplied by the UK technology distributor."
- "Case studies and trials suggest that discharge loads [from adsorptive media] are reduced by between 60-70%. This removal rate has been calculated using influent and effluent data from trial sites."

Based on the above removal rates, where it is not possible to get sufficient representative samples to assess the removal rate of interventions delivered through the PC, the assumed removal rate of 65% shall be applied, as outlined in **section 6.2.1** in the methodology. If a different technology from the above is used, then an intervention can only be claimed if there is sufficient sampling to calculate the removal rate accurately.

2.2.2 Clarification of existing methodology

Sampling regime: 2025 and 2026
For interventions on septic tanks and private WwTWs 12 pre and post intervention samples will be taken in 2025 and 2026, however these will need to be over less than a 12 month period to enable UUW to deliver interventions in these years, with the samples being taken over a minimum of 2 weeks. This enables UUW to maximise the number of interventions throughout the whole 2025-30 period and deliver benefit to Windermere sooner. If samples are deemed not to be representative, then the conservative baseline loads will be used which will ensure that UUW is not unduly claiming phosphorus removal. Where sampling is not able to determine the removal rate, 65% will be used for removal. The reasoning for 65% removal has been added to section 5 of the methodology and section 2.2.1 of this document. As stated in Table 3 of the methodology if it is possible to simultaneously sample before and after an intervention, this method can be used to measure the phosphorus base load and amount of phosphorus removed. In this case, no sampling is required before the intervention has taken place as this sampling regime will provide information on the phosphorus that would be entering the water course both without the intervention and with. This would be the preferred method due to its accuracy for measuring performance. However, it is expected opportunities for this will be limited due to practicalities of sampling before the intervention, i.e. buried pipelines that are not accessible.

12 pre-invention and post intervention sample sets are required ahead of any benefit of the intervention being claimed as part of this PC. This will be over a minimum of 2 weeks.

Non sampling approval
Due to the type and location of the interventions it will not always be possible to sample (i.e. pipes to septic tanks could be buried deep underground and discharges from septic tanks could discharge into a combined pipeline). As stated in the methodology in Section 6.2, where an intervention has been identified, but sampling is prevented, a Non-sampling Approval form will be created and shared with the EA and governance group.

Examples are given in Section 6.2 of the methodology to illustrate the type of circumstances when sampling would be considered "prevented". Subject to approval by the EA and the governance group of the reasoning set out in the Non-sampling Approval form, UUW will then use the modelled values to report the base load phosphorus emissions and the outcome of the intervention. UUW will continue to review the possibility of sampling throughout the intervention and undertake on-site sampling if it becomes possible to do so at a later point.

Similarly, where the Independent Assurer and / or the governance group do not consider that samples collected are sufficient or representative, the modelled values will be used which as we describe above take a conservative approach. This clarification has been included in the methodology section 6.1.

Agricultural catchment sampling strategy

Sampling of catchment interventions has been clarified in Table 1 of the methodology document. Assessing their impact is very difficult due to uncontrollable environmental variations such as (but not limited to) seasonal variations and changing farming practices. This makes it difficult to confidently isolate the impact of an intervention from other variations. As clarified in the updated Table 1 of the methodology, "Modelled values will be used for catchment interventions" and further detail is given in section 3.2.2 of this document regarding the Farmscoper model which will be used to calculate the impact of catchment interventions.

UUW has committed to undertaking catchment sampling, so that data will be gathered even though it will not form the basis of the assessment of a catchment intervention. UUW will work with the governance group on a case by case basis to agree an appropriate sampling schedule and location for catchment interventions. Catchment sampling data will be shared with interested stakeholders and included in the summary report produced by 1 September each year, from 2026.

Regulatory delays

Please refer to 'Fulfilling regulatory expectations' in section 5.2.1 of this document.

Removal rates and baselining

UUW will base the reported phosphorus removal rates on sample data wherever this is possible. Recognising feedback that we have had to the consultation, UUW will use sample data only where we can gather a minimum of 12 samples of pre- and post-intervention samples. Theoretical values will be used where sampling is not possible, or not representative (for example if 12 samples cannot be taken over a sufficient time frame to allow meaningful phosphorus reduction analysis to be undertaken). The two sections below detail how, when necessary, removal rates will be calculated based on standard assumptions and how this is a conservative approach to avoid overestimating phosphorus reduction. Further detail on the removal rate is given in section 2.2.1 of this document.

Removal Rates: Domestic Septic Tanks

The current load from domestic septic tanks has been determined by a literature review as outlined in the Viridian report: *'Windermere Water Quality Management Opportunities Project Report'*. It is based on standard assumptions of 2.2 people (hd) living in a residence[1] consuming 150l/hd/d (litres per head per day)[2].

This equates to a consumption in litres per day of 2.2hd * 150l/hd/d = 330l/d per septic tank.

The averaged reported effluent concentrations from case studies[3] in the Viridian report was 12mg/l total phosphorus. This equates to a total phosphorus load per septic tank of 1.5kgTP/y (kilograms of total phosphorus per year):

330l/d * 12mg/l = 3.96g/d which equates to 1.45kgTP/y per septic tank with an occupancy of 2.2 people.

A separate study found that the total kilogrammes of phosphorus per year was closer to 0.52kgTP/y per person. This is equivalent to 1.14kgTP/y per septic tank assuming the occupancy rates above of 2.2 people.

The average of these two figures (1.30kgTP/y) will be used with an assumed occupancy rate of 2.2 people. This gives a per capita figure of 1.61gTP/hd/d (grams of total phosphorus per head per day). This is calculated by converting from years to days (divide by 365), converting kg to g (multiply 1000) and dividing by the occupancy rate to get the per capita value (divide by 2.2).

This is a more conservative approach to per capita total phosphorus than both UU's asset standard design figure and the figure used by other water companies which is predominantly based on larger catchments and includes

[1] Chapter 1: Profile of households and dwellings - GOV.UK – Mean household population in 2022-23 was 2.2.

[2] British_Water_flows_and_loads.pdf – British Water Code of Practice loading for standard residential dwelling is 105l/hd/d

[3] Viridian report: *'Windermere Water Quality Management Opportunities Project Report'* – November 2022

for some runoff. It is also conservative compared with other studies which have put this number at 2.03gTP/hd/d.[4]

In cases where there are known to be several properties connected to a septic tank, the standard occupancy rate of 2.2 per tank will still be used multiplied by the number of known connected properties.

By being more conservative it means that any benefits calculated using this method are likely to be an underestimate. This will minimise the risk of over reporting of the amount of phosphorus removed.

For example, a septic tank with 1 property connected with 6 occupants with an intervention that cannot be sampled will have the following phosphorus removal:

Assumed septic tank load = 1.30kgTP/y.

*This is despite the phosphorus load likely being 1.61gTP/hd/d * 6 people = 3.53kgTP/y. This is to prevent over reporting phosphorus load on septic tanks.*

As sampling cannot be completed the assumed removal rate will be used of 65%.

Therefore, phosphorus removed from this intervention will be 65% * 1.3kgTP/y = 0.85kgTP/y.

Removal rates: Private Sewage treatment works

Given that the two studies referenced above were specific to septic tanks, the lower of the two values, 1.14kgTP/y per septic tank at 2.2 occupancy, was used to calculate the load for private sewage treatment works. This is to prevent over reporting the load removal. As referenced above, we already consider these values to be conservative.

The figures in *Table 3: Modelled Phosphorus load values* in the Wonderful Windermere PC methodology are based on an occupancy of 2.2 for comparative purposes only, as stated below the table. When calculating the load and load reduction for private sewage treatment works the average occupancy rate across the year will be used for the connected population. This is to ensure that the calculated load is representative. This will be obtained from the owner/occupier of the property and will be signed off as part of the assurance process outlined in section 6.1 of the Wonderful Windermere PC methodology.

Table 3: Modelled phosphorus load values

Tank Type	Load kg/y	Removal rate	Reduction kg/y
Domestic	1.3	65%	0.85
Private sewage treatment works	1.14*	65%	0.74*

The modelled phosphorus load values have been informed by the Viridian Logic Ltd report '*Windermere Water Quality Management Opportunities November 2022*[2].

*normalised to average occupancy of 2.2 for comparative purposes.

For example, a private sewage treatment works on a campsite that has a capacity of 80 people but is full 50% of the year and at 40% occupancy the remainder of the year would be calculated as below:

Occupancy: (100% * 50%) + (40% * 50%) = 50% + 20% =70% average capacity across the year.

Therefore, annual average occupancy = 70% * 80 people = 56 people.

1.14kgTP/y per septic tank at 2.2 occupancy equates to a per capita figure of 1.42gTP/hd/d. This is calculated by converting from years to days (divide by 365), converting kg to g (multiply 1000) and dividing by the occupancy rate to get the per capita value (divide by 2.2).

Load to the private sewage treatment works = 56 people * 1.42gTP/hd/d = 79.5gTP/d = 29.0kgTP/y

If sampling cannot be taken the standard removal rate of 65% will be used.

[4] Domestic sources of P.pdf - *Domestic source of phosphorus to sewage treatment works* - Comber, Sean; Gardner, Michael; Georges, Karyn; Blackwood, David; Gilmour, Daniel 2013).

Therefore, total phosphorus removal = 65% * 29.0kgTP/y = 18.9kgTP/y

Spot Sampling
All information regarding how samples were collected, and the subsequent analysis will be provided to the independent assurer to provide scrutiny and ensure that the results are representative. If results are not representative, then the modelled baseline load will be used with the standard removal rate to calculate the phosphorus removal. The role of the independent assurer is outlined in Section 9.1 of the methodology.

Septic tanks discharging to leach fields
UUW acknowledges that sampling directly from land, such as leach fields can be difficult and not necessarily be representative due to variation in the environment, for example a sample taken during heavy rainfall could have a very low total phosphorus concentration that is result of dilution only. On septic tanks with leach fields UUW will evaluate the best place to sample. Where the septic tank is directly being replaced with an alternative technology then the most representative sample to calculate the benefit of the intervention will be immediately downstream of the intervention, ideally before any dilution or external influence can impact. If this is not possible, for example, due to insufficient access to the intervention outlet then sampling after the leach field will be necessary. Following the intervention these sample results will show a reduction in phosphorus however due to the impact of other influences these results are unlikely to be able to be used to accurately determine the phosphorus removal of the intervention. Sampling post leach field will provide further information about the catchment, however assumed removals (based on actual data as outlined in section 5 of the methodology document) will be used instead.

As outlined in the methodology, if samples are not considered to be representative by the independent assurer and Love Windermere governance group, modelled reductions in phosphorus will be calculated, as detailed in this document in section 3.2.2. If a sample is not able to be collected, we would follow our Non-sampling Approval process as outlined in the methodology document, section 6.2.

Approach to engaging land owners
We recognise feedback regarding how we engage with landowners and the organisations involved in this process. Partnership working will be key to drive engagement and ultimately delivery of any catchment interventions. UUW will work with appropriate organisations to facilitate engagement with land owners and to support them throughout the delivery of interventions. Confirmation that a farm complies with the requirements of Farming Rules for Water will need to be made by the Environment Agency before an intervention is delivered, but the approach to working with the sector will be broader.

2.2.3 Acknowledgement of additional feedback

Sampling and sample analysis
UUW has a history of compliance with the regulatory standards for sampling. This demonstrates our ability to take, transport, store and analyse samples that are representative and can be used to obtain accurate and reliable results. Sampling will be carried out in accordance with United Utilities' sampling procedures to ensure representative samples are obtained.

All sampling analysis will be carried out at United Utilities' UKAS accredited laboratory (or another UKAS accredited laboratory if necessary). A UKAS accredited laboratory is one that has been assessed and approved by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to meet specific international standards for competence and quality.

All results from the sample analysis will be available as part of a report produced annually for 1 September from 2026. This report will be reviewed by the independent assurer prior to publication, and their comments on the final report will also be published as outlined in section 6.1 of the methodology.

3. Question 3

Modelling (Section 6.2, Section 7.1) Verified modelled values will be used to claim phosphorus reduction outputs for catchment interventions and for interventions where sampling is prevented or not possible. Do you have any comments regarding the proposed modelled values?

3.1 Consultee Responses

Consultee	Response
UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH)	I think you will need to have collected some real values in the catchment to validate the use of modelled values for any of these approaches. Otherwise you should demonstrate the uncertainty in the modelled estimates by assessing these as a range.
Impact & Lake District Country Hotels	No response provided.
Save Windermere	Given the scale and significance of the decisions being based on SAGIS, we strongly contest its suitability and call for a fully transparent, peer-reviewed assessment of its calibration, assumptions, source code and outputs. Predetermined assumptions and occupancy averages do not take into account real-world variation in household sizes or treatment effectiveness and no evidence is provided to explain how this will be taken into consideration, introducing a systemic risk of misreporting. Models may be updated at UUW's discretion, creating a clear conflict of interest, especially in year five when only modelled values will be used to assess performance, introducing a high risk of performance inflation. Concerns around the use of ADAS Farmscoper, developed as part of a DEFRA project, which seems to be owned and developed by ADAS, part of the RSK Group, which includes WGM Engineering, a contractor for UU's capital works programme, as well as MWH Treatment. MWH's recent Integrated Constructed Wetland at Southwaite Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) lacked evidence of effectiveness and post-implementation analysis actually showed increased environmental phosphorus loading, despite UU claiming reductions. The consultation provides no transparency on how Farmscoper works, whether it is appropriate or what assumptions it uses, and the governance structure fails to ensure impartial review of its outputs. Reductions from agricultural sources are based on vague "fair share" baselines, with no transparent methodology or stated confidence levels. These figures appear to rely on models like SAGIS, already flagged as unreliable. Assumptions around current intervention uptake are a core issue. Assumed uptake levels for farm interventions are generally low, except for a 40% rate estimated for riparian buffer strips and fencing. This raises two concerns: these low baselines may exaggerate the agricultural sector's phosphorus contribution, and they allow for effectiveness to be overstates by claiming high gains from an artificially low baseline. We urge Ofwat to take the following actions before accepting any aspect of the proposed BPC: Require the use of independent, publicly accessible modelling tools and real-time sampling, ensuring that claimed reductions are evidence-based and verifiable through direct measurement rather than untested models. The continued reliance on modelled outputs, rather than measured data, to account for agricultural phosphorus reductions remains deeply problematic. While *Farmscoper* is referenced as a sector-recognised tool, no commitment has been made to subject its assumptions, calibration, or outputs to independent, peer-reviewed scrutiny. There is no sampling strategy or assurance schedule in place to verify that agricultural interventions actually deliver the phosphorus reductions they are credited for. This opens up a critical evidentiary gap that undermines the legitimacy of any claimed environmental benefit. The vague nature of agricultural contributions at a local level, unquantified reductions

Consultee	Response
	through land-based interventions, conflicts of interest, the absence of a sampling regime, and weak regulatory oversight all fail to address the concerns previously raised. As a final point, if agricultural intervention were to be removed from the BPC, we would be more inclined to support the concept of this piece of work. It is clear that the methodology lacks sufficient rigour to quantify agricultural "improvements", and current source apportionment modelling lacks appropriate on-the-ground evidence to support claims about the percentage of agricultural contributions to phosphorous loading in Windermere.
South Cumbria Rivers Trust	SCRT would suggest a minor amendment to the methodology, specifically relating to utilising modelled data for agricultural assets. Where is does reference 'details of the sampling required will be agreed as necessary with EA and the Love Windermere governance group' in Table 1 on page 11, reference to sampling is not provided in Section 7, Agricultural and land-based interventions. Monitoring should be prioritised where possible. Each agricultural asset will be different and there may well be opportunities to sample at specific points, pre and post intervention. Where possible, sampling should be the preferred option and where possible, completed in conjunction with modelling. Where sampling is not possible, the Farmscoper methodology in section 7 of the WW PC would then be used.
Love Windermere Partnership	We are satisfied that the proposed modelled values, and the reasons for using a modelled approach, are appropriate. Love Windermere Partners have extensive practical experience of working in this catchment and agree that the reasons given for not taking a sample accurately reflect the observed scenarios in this catchment and when assessing private sewage treatment, including septic tanks generally. We are satisfied with the proposed modelled values that are based on the same values used by the Love Windermere Partnership in designing and delivering our interventions to reduce nutrient inputs to Windermere. Modelled values could potentially be improved with investment in a sub-catchment nutrient budget and the Love Windermere Partnership is exploring funding options for this work. If a nutrient budget is delivered for Windermere, Love Windermere Partnership would explore how this methodology could be updated in light of more detailed information. Consideration should be given to a minor amendment to the methodology, specifically relating to utilising modelled data for agricultural assets. Whilst 'details of the sampling required will be agreed as necessary with EA and the Love Windermere governance group' is referenced in Table 1 on page 11, no similar reference to sampling is provided in Section 7, Agricultural and land-based interventions. Monitoring should be prioritised where possible. Each agricultural asset will be different and there may well be opportunities to sample at specific points, pre and post intervention. Where possible, sampling should be the preferred option and where possible, completed in conjunction with modelling. Where sampling is not possible, the Farmscoper methodology in section 7 of the performance commitment would then be used. The Partnership would suggest that the Decision Support Tree in figure 2 in specific relation to catchment agriculture is changed from "Check if the landowners is engaged and the agricultural land-assets is currently compliant with legal and regulatory requirements" to "Check if the landowner is engaged and the agricultural land/assets is currently compliant or is progressing to compliance with legal and regulatory requirements prior to the completion of any proposed additionality intervention". This recognises the continuing work needed with the land use sector to ensure adherence with compliance and will ensure United Utilities can make meaningful contribution to the agricultural sector in the catchment whilst others work to support compliance.
Consultee 6	Modelled values should be applied with caution and caveated appropriately. They should be used as a last resort for data analysis.

3.2 UUW Response

3.2.1 Amendments to methodology

Generally, responses to Question 3 related to the use of modelling for catchment interventions. We have taken this feedback on board and provided further clarification in the section below.

Assumptions on occupancy
There has been a change in section 6.2.1. of the methodology to make it clear that the yearly average occupancy will be used for interventions on private Wastewater Treatment Works. This is as per the calculation given in section 2.2.2 in this document.

3.2.2 Clarification of existing methodology

Model Validation
As stated in section 6.1 of the methodology, an annual report on all sample results will be produced for 1 September each year, from 2026. This will provide analysis and details of intervention results. From this report, UUW will put forward updated modelled removal rates relating to septic tanks and private WwTWs, based on sample data collected as part of this PC. Recommendations will be put forward to the governance group and will be scrutinised and agreed by the independent assurer before the methodology is changed to reflect this with Ofwat.

See below for UUW approach to modelling for catchment interventions.

Farmscoper
The use of Farmscoper has received both support and challenge from consultees. Farmscoper owned and developed independently of UUW and is a well-established tool. It is used by water companies and regulators and is widely used in the farming industry. It is freely available to download making it an accessible and transparent approach to assessing the impact of catchment interventions. UUW has updated the methodology to include a website link to where Farmscoper can be accessed (Section 7).

UUW recognises that assessing catchment interventions is a difficult and complex activity, and a pre and post intervention regime of catchment sampling does not enable the impact of specific interventions to be isolated from wider changes in the catchment, such as seasonal variations and changes to farming practices, in order to assess the impact of a specific intervention.

To best represent catchment and agricultural interventions within the PC, UUW will use Farmscoper. This is a decision support tool originally developed by Defra which can be used to assess the impact of mitigation (such as hedgerow planting) in reducing diffuse agricultural pollution. The tool allows different management and environmental conditions on farms to be represented in the analysis and contains over 100 different types of mitigation, including many from Defra's Mitigation Method User Guide.

SIMCAT SAGIS
The SIMCAT SAGIS model is not being used to support any part of this PC. It is not part of the methodology for selecting interventions, assessing the phosphorus reduction delivered, or any other aspect of the PC.

Fairshare
UUW has included further information and clarification on the fair share principle in section 7.1 of the methodology to outline that this is rooted in existing regulatory principles.

Catchment sampling
Please refer to UUW's response in section 2.2.2 of this document ('Agricultural catchment sampling strategy') which clarifies feedback on catchment sampling.

Confirmation of Compliant Assets
As noted throughout the methodology, compliance at a site or an asset will be confirmed by the EA. Compliance at a site must be confirmed and recorded by the EA before UUW can intervene under this PC, as noted on page 4 of Ofwat's definition document.

Once, a site or assets have been confirmed to be compliant by the EA, UUW will then be able to introduce an intervention. As noted in section 6.1 of the methodology, in the case that when UUW first considers an asset and it is not fully compliant with its legal obligations but later becomes so through work by others, this asset will then become eligible for further interventions.

4. Question 4

Governance (Section 9): Throughout the PC, the governance group will play a key part in having oversight and signing off all interventions as part of this PC. Do you have any recommendations for how this group should be used throughout the PC?

4.1 Consultee Responses

Consultee	Response
UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH)	Something missing from the methodology is how you will select sites to carry out interventions, currently this is really vague. To achieve the highest level of P reduction and best value for the investment you should be targeting the largest potential sources and should use existing data/ evidence to do this. I think it is also likely that you will identify many sites that aren't currently compliant with the existing rules, whether that's sewage or farming. These need recording to understand the scale of non-compliance, even if you won't be carrying out interventions at those sites. The governance group needs to carefully track how the PC is being implemented and identify the priorities early on in the work, based on potential largest benefit. It will be hard to justify a piecemeal approach and could open up the work to criticism. The group should identify what the key objective of the PC is e.g. is it about maximising P reduction or about demonstrating different measures and ensure that the allocation of resources delivers that objective. The group also needs to consider how it will handle the issue of ongoing maintenance of the assets produced beyond the PC, so that the legacy of the project is not lost due to poor maintenance of P absorbing material etc. Recommendations could be made as to how to ensure that these interventions are continued into the future, particularly if new compliance measures/rules are required.
Impact & Lake District Country Hotels	No response provided.
Save Windermere	The consultation offers no assurance about how interventions will be delivered or by whom, creating further potential for exploitation. This risk of manipulation to benefit Love Windermere and its member organisations is underscored by UU's own admission that *"through this performance commitment UUW will be able to support driving further improvements through partnership work, and on a scale it otherwise would not be able to achieve.".* These financial relationships raise serious concerns about impartiality, especially as key decisions (e.g. what qualifies as an "intervention," or whether sampling is "prevented") rest on the subjective judgment of the governance group, identified by UU as the EA and Love Windermere partnership. This structure provides no independent third-party validation, no defined decision thresholds and no audit mechanisms. As a result, we do not believe it is appropriate for Ofwat to permit the current proposed governance structure for this scheme. We urge Ofwat to take the following actions before accepting any aspect of the proposed BPC: Establish independent oversight of the BPC, with all organisations receiving financial contributions from United Utilities excluded from the governance structure. This oversight body should include impartial stakeholders such as landowners, farmers and community representatives. Throughout the methodology, the underlying conflicts of interest have not been resolved. Either United Utilities, or the Love Windermere partnership, in which UU plays a leading role, continues to set the rules, contribute to the modelling approach, select interventions, shape the assurance framework, and ultimately monitor success. The need for a genuinely independent and robust vetting system is critical to ensure that any claimed phosphorus reductions are credible and that the BPC does not become a greenwashing exercise. Simply put, parties that design, implement, measure and benefit from phosphorus reduction interventions, whether financially or reputationally, cannot credibly be left to measure such

Consultee	Response
	performance while these conflicts remain. This applies whether through direct delivery of the BPC or via unresolved external interests embedded within the partnership structure. Although the introduction of an independent assurer is cited as a governance improvement, this measure lacks credibility. The assurer is to be appointed either by United Utilities or the Love Windermere partnership. As such, the assurer cannot be considered meaningfully independent, nor is their scope or appointment subject to third-party agreement. There remains no external governance body overseeing the BPC process or determining what constitutes acceptable data or methodology. The lack of clarity surrounding who pays for the assurer also needs to be addressed, as this may influence both participation and conclusions.
South Cumbria Rivers Trust	SCRT would suggest amendments in the methodology to include governance review at relevant stages throughout the WW PC. Annual Board review could coincide with the data review deadline before the 1st September annually. Board Governance review would allow Love Windermere partners to assess the decision support tree structure to ensure robust and effective delivery. We would also suggest workstream governance review at relevant stages throughout the year, especially when quantifying possible interventions. Current methodology detail is limited and whilst we are supportive of the PC, we would suggest mention to specific review dates to ensure transparent appraisal and evaluation of interventions and the decision-making process.
Love Windermere Partnership	The governance offered through the Love Windermere Partnership provides robust accountability for the delivery of 'Wonderful Windermere' by a range of public, private and third sector organisations. Love Windermere Partners have extensive experience and expertise of assessing water quality in this and other catchments, working with private sewage operators and land managers and in regulation. Working in collaboration to review these interventions and the methodology as projects are delivered provides a robust mechanism to ensure Phosphorus savings are achieved and the methodology, reporting and governance are reviewed as 'Wonderful Windermere' is delivered. We believe this bespoke performance commitment may enable match funding opportunities and/or projects that complement this work. For example, alignment with flood risk management investment where projects deliver multiple outcomes. We are aware that South Cumbria Rivers Trust, one of the Love Windermere Partners, has made separate representations to this consultation regarding ongoing governance review. We would welcome the opportunity to further consider the detailed governance arrangements methodology, which have not been possible due to the limited time available in which to make this consultation response.
Consultee 6	The governance group needs to be representative of the whole catchment. The governance group should be used to agree on the each intervention approach and to agree on use and relevance of data collection following those initial intervention. It should be focused group, capable of making decisions quickly and efficiently as part of this project. It should be established from the outset deliver and not fail and the process of making decisions clear and decisive in its set up.

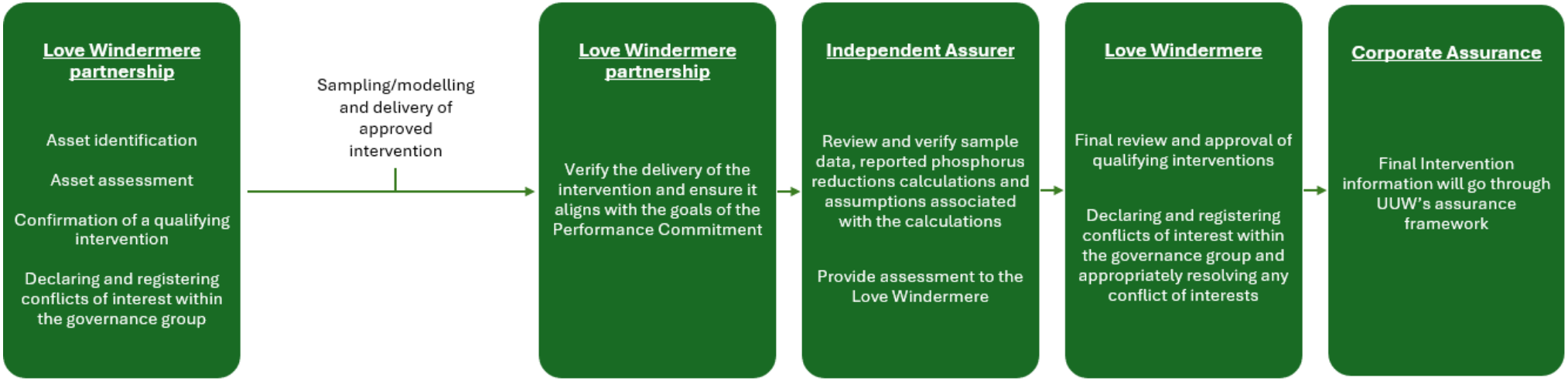
4.2 UUW Response

4.2.1 Amendments to methodology

Governance and Assurance flow chart

A Governance and Assurance flow chart (**Appendix C**) has been included in the methodology to provide clarity on the governance process and the roles of the stakeholder included in the governance process.

Governance and Assurance flow chart (Appendix C of the methodology document)



Governance and conflict of interest
UUW has clarified the governance process and outlined responsibilities of partners to ensure this does not occur. As mentioned previously, UUW will also appoint an independent assurer to ensure its governance of the PC is robust and supported by evidence.

- **Section 9.1 in the methodology** states "Conflicts of interest: Will be declared, registered and reviewed through the governance group and appropriate mitigating actions will be taken. For example, any partner organisation who has delivered an intervention as part of the performance commitment would be barred from the process to review and approve the phosphorus reduction delivered by the intervention. The conflicts of interest statement will be included in the September annual report. The annual report will be published from 2026 onwards. The scope of the report is the Wonderful Windermere PC performance and methodology. The purpose of the report is to report on the previous years' performance and activity; conflicts of interest; and to specify required changes to the methodology for the following year."

Addition of an independent assurer
UUW has introduced an independent assurer to provide external scrutiny of the PC and an independent view to Love Windermere to ensure its governance of the PC is robust and supported by evidence. The independent assurer will sit outside of the governance group.

Please refer to section 2.2.1 ('Introduction of an independent assurer') of this document, outlining the addition of an independent assurer and how they will be appointed. The 'Governance and Assurance flow chart' above displays where the independent assurer fits in the governance process of this PC.

Changes to the methodology have been made to include the independent assurer's scrutiny of:

- Sample data analysis
- Assumptions underpinning phosphorus removal calculations
- Reported phosphorus reductions achieved
- Data in the annual report to be published on 1 September each year from 2026 onwards.

Section 9.1 of the draft methodology outlines the independent assurer's responsibilities and states "The role of the independent assurer will be to provide external scrutiny of the PC and an independent view to the governance group to ensure its governance of the PC is robust and supported by evidence.".

4.2.2 Clarification of existing methodology

Selection of site and the priorities of the governance group
UUW will utilise the relevant workstreams within the Love Windermere partnership to identify, select and confirm sites that will be suitable for interventions as part of this PC. Through the relevant workstreams as part of the partnership, priority locations will be identified, and interventions will be delivered based on the optimum phosphorus removal to drive the greatest benefits.

Ongoing maintenance
Interventions delivered under this PC will be owned by the existing asset owner, and not by UUW, and it will be the responsibility of the asset owner to maintain them. Asset owners will be made aware of the ongoing maintenance requirements of interventions before they are delivered, so that they understand the ongoing maintenance requirements before confirming their participation in the PC.

Working with asset owners whose existing asset has been confirmed as compliant by the EA, UUW will be delivering interventions for asset owners who are already demonstrating a responsible approach to maintaining their existing asset so that it operates effectively and compliantly.

Governance by Love Windermere
Love Windermere has nine partner members, which includes regulators, local authorities, NGOs and charities:

- Cumbria Tourism
- Environment Agency

- Lake District Foundation
- Lake District National Park
- National Trust
- National Farmers Union
- South Cumbria Rivers Trust
- United Utilities
- Westmorland and Furness Council

The Independent Chair of Love Windermere is drawn from an organisation independent of the Love Windermere partnership organisations.

Love Windermere is an initiative funded by its partner organisations (including United Utilities), both financially and through "in kind" contributions. It has also received funding from other bodies such as the European Union. The Love Windermere website[5] outlines how the organisation is funded, stating:

> *"The partnership is funded through multiple sources, including partner contributions and external grants. With each organisation supporting the partnership in various ways. For instance, Partners may provide staff time and expertise, generally on an 'in-kind' basis, to assist in developing the Love Windermere Action Plan. Additionally, partners may offer venues for meetings and community events as 'in-kind' contributions. Specific projects also receive grant funding, such as the Windermere Farm Engagement Project funded through the LDNPA Farming in Protected Landscapes Fund, and Revere, funded through private finance.*
>
> *Working in partnership allows us to pool our resources effectively, as exemplified by the Hello Lampost AI engagement posters installed at Rayrigg and Millerground. The Environment Agency funded this project, and by collaborating with the National Trust as the landowner, we were able to secure locations for the installations. The Rangers from the National Trust also provided invaluable assistance in erecting the posts.*
>
> *Whilst we work with a number of organisations, there are only three fixed roles within the Love Windermere Partnership: the Independent Chair, which is an unpaid position; the Partnership Manager, funded entirely by the Environment Agency; and Communications & Engagement Officer, which is majority funded by Lake District National Park Authority with contributions from the National Trust, Lake District Foundation, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Westmorland and Furness Council, and United Utilities. No single organisation funds the Love Windermere Partnership and all decisions are based on independent scientific evidence, ensuring that every voice is heard and given equal weight."*

The use of Love Windermere in the governance group is included in Ofwat's Wonderful Windermere Performance Commitment definition, published in the PR24 Final Determination[6]. Ofwat has met members of the Love Windermere partnership and its independent Chair, to understand their role and their expertise.

As well as the Love Windermere governance group being chaired by an independent third party, the governance structure used to report performance under the PC methodology will now also include an independent assurer to verify the reported data. UUW has also clarified how conflicts of interest will be managed, and made clear that any Love Windermere partner organisation which benefits from an intervention (for example by delivering an intervention on UUW's behalf, or having an intervention on their asset), will not be part of the process to review and approve the benefits of the intervention.

[5] https://lovewindermere.co.uk/about-us/

[6] See Ofwat website, "Wonderful Windermere PR24 Bespoke performance commitment definition", https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Wonderful-Windermere.pdf, page 4

Compliance with existing requirements

As noted throughout the methodology, compliance at a site or an asset will be confirmed by the EA, which also maintains records of non-compliance based on their compliance assessments. Once a site or asset has been confirmed to be compliant by the EA, then UUW will be able to introduce an intervention. As noted in section 6.1 of the methodology, in the case that when UUW first considers an asset and it is not fully compliant with its legal obligations but later becomes so through work by others, this asset will then become eligible for further interventions.

Match funding

As noted in section 9.1 of the methodology, the governance group will be informed and have oversight of the "Consideration of opportunities for match funding and/or complementary activity that will be developed through the asset assessment report.".

5. Additional Feedback

In addition to the responses UUW received directly relating to the consultation questions, additional feedback was received. A summary of key points is below.

5.1 Consultee Additional Feedback

Consultee	Additional Feedback
Save Windermere	We are particularly concerned that both UU and the Environment Agency (EA) have already failed to meet the first key milestone of this commitment: by 1 March 2025, they were required to agree a process for assessing the monitoring and compliance of third-party assets. This foundational step was not completed. Ofwat has stated clearly that *"failing to do so [report by March 1st] will result in the company being unable to claim outperformance under this performance commitment.".* Secondly, there are serious concerns about the scale of potential profit United Utilities could derive from this scheme. The methodology lacks transparency around how financial incentives are calculated, creating a significant risk that the BPC could function more as a vehicle for commercial gain than genuine environmental improvement. This concern is especially troubling given the use of public funds and the current public attention on the Windermere catchment, promoting the idea that actions are being taken to address water quality. Given our ongoing concerns regarding United Utilities' financial agenda, and the fact that Ofwat has only deferred, rather than removed, the potential for financial reward, the incentive to overstate reductions remains in place. So long as Ofwat permits that structure to exist, the motivation to use discretionary assumptions, internally selected tools, and self-controlled assurance mechanisms will persist.

5.2 UUW Response

5.2.1 Wider response to Wonderful Windermere

Fulfilling regulatory expectations

UUW received a response which suggested it had failed to complete an action to agree a process for assessing the monitoring and compliance of third party assets with the EA by 1 March 2025, as stipulated in Ofwat's Final Determination (FD) "Wonderful Windermere PC definition document"[7] published 19 December 2024.

A process for assessing the monitoring and compliance of third party assets was agreed with the EA, and a copy of the resulting draft methodology[8] was sent to Ofwat on 20 February 2025, ahead of the 1 March 2025 deadline. Subsequent to this, Ofwat requested United Utilities consult on this methodology, and it was made available for consultation between 9-18 June 2025, with an extension to enable further consultation from 24 June to 4 July.

Financial incentives

UUW received a response regarding the financial incentives attached to the PC and the potential for it to earn financial rewards from successful delivery against the PC targets.

In response to this UUW has engaged with Ofwat and proposed that, on this occasion, there should be no financial outcome delivery incentive applied to this PC for AMP8. UUW would report against the PC targets during AMP8 but financial incentives for performance would not apply. Ofwat did not accept this proposal, and the financial incentive will be retained for 2025-30.

[7] https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Wonderful-Windermere.pdf

[8] A copy of this version of the draft methodology is available here currently: https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/publication/wonderful-windermere-methodology/

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