South Staffs Water

2023-24 APR - Open data

Our APR contains a significant volume of data which is of interest to both within and outside the water industry. We want this data to be open and accessible to all.

Last year, we considered what characteristics of data would enable stakeholders to get a **better understanding** of the information contained within our APR. We included important metadata into key tables. The rationale for these were:

- Publication date and version number – This enables users of the data to track any possible changes, for example through Ofwat queries which may lead to an update.
- A cross reference to the relevant Regulatory Accounting Guidelines (RAGs) which defines the data included in the tables. Without this, users may misinterpret what the information is and this could lead to incorrect decision making.
- A cross reference to our own methodology. Although the RAGs are generally prescriptive, there are some areas where the guidance is more open to interpretation. An example is the tables where costs are allocated between different parts of the value chain. In order to aid users in comparing across the industry, we referenced our own methodology where relevant.
- Within our methodology we set out other important information including where there have been changes to the approach compared to the previous year and an explanation of any significant movement in values from the previous year. This will help users to understand the consistency of information between years and whether there are any exceptional movements to take into account when looking at data trends.

In September 2023, Ofwat fed back on how companies were progressing on making their APR data open. We acknowledge that there is more we can do to make our data more accessible. We have been part of an industry project to convert the Ofwat APR data template format into an Open Data format. As a result, for APR24 we have produced and published a version of APR in machine readable format. Each section of the APR is available as a CSV file and can be found on our annual reporting landing page here

Open data is continually evolving and there will be new and better ways of making our APR data more accessible. We therefore welcome any comments on our approach and suggestions of how we could improve. In particular:

- What do you use the APR data for? Are there particular areas of data that you are particularly interested in or where more detail would be of use?
- Is there a better way to present our APR in an open data format?
- Should any data be made available on a more regular basis than annually?
- Is the metadata helpful? Are there any further explanations that would make things clearer?

We also want to use the learnings of opening up our APR data to drive other open data releases. As a water company, we already publish many other key datasets including Business Plans, Water Resource Management Plans and charges. There is also data that we use internally but may also be of interest to a wider audience. In order to ensure that we develop our Open Data journey in the best interest of stakeholders, we want to hear about:

- What other data should we make more accessible and how should we do this?
- What would this data be used for? Does this require it to be in a particular format?
- How frequently should this data be published?

Please send any comments to regulation@south-staffs-water.co.uk