

# Shaping a water sector workforce to deliver AMP8



Our second AMP8 Readiness Roundtable discussion, hosted by Reson8 Partner, Alex Graham, brought together sector leaders to explore how water companies can develop roles and organisations capable of delivering asset investment plans to tight budgets and timescales.

## Key strategies for effective delivery

During the hour-long session, many different strategies were discussed. In this synopsis, we have highlighted the **three distinct approaches being adopted by water companies across the country**. We hope you will find these helpful as you consider how to gear up for the coming wave of AMP8 capital investment.

The final section of this document explores **how to facilitate the behavioural changes required** to enable any of these three strategies.

## Assemble multidisciplinary squads

To mitigate the challenges associated with delivering capital projects on existing sites, **organisations must "rewire" traditional silos** by implementing cross-functional teams. One practical approach is territorial collaboration.

This strategy involves dividing geographical asset bases into smaller areas, such as counties, to foster joint problem-solving and improve operational efficiency. Kate Reynolds explained how UU has assembled financially empowered, cross-functional squads accountable for performance and scheme delivery across each local area.

Squads are drawn from functions including:

**Operational  
asset owners**

**Asset  
managers**

**Capital delivery  
sponsors**

**Customer  
teams**

By assembling these squads early and involving them in the capital delivery cycle from the beginning, any site requirements and challenges can be surfaced, identified and resolved before work commences.

**"We look at the challenges we might be creating for each other and come up with solutions to those issues together."**

Kate Reynolds

Head of Operational Transformation

United Utilities



## Create a win-win for operational resilience and capital outcomes

Rather than prioritising project completion and vacating a site as quickly as possible, the emphasis must shift to **delivering sites functioning at peak performance**. This ensures operations teams aren't left spending valuable time and resources firefighting unresolved issues. **Two critical steps are required to achieve this:**

- 1** Utilise CapEx budgets to optimise the existing asset base and ensure peak performance before constructing new assets.
- 2** Stay and invest until each site performs stably and optimally, rather than leaving behind a greater requirement for power, chemicals and operational tasks because the site wasn't fully optimised.

Working closely with operational asset owners in this way will ensure capital projects genuinely contribute to the regulatory commitments of AMP8 while enhancing the existing asset base.

## Invest in tech-enabled collaborative governance

Robust and clear governance underpins how effectively different teams work together and builds confidence through each project in the programme. **Two crucial elements include:**

- 1** **Develop a sponsorship framework** for AMP8 to ensure you consistently equip and train all capital project scheme Sponsors as technically capable and empowered. It strengthens the link between operations asset owners, their capital delivery sponsor and the programme delivery teams.

- 2** **Define clear intervention points** at the start of a project life cycle to enable operations, particularly early gates, to influence, guide, and, if necessary, stop decisions being made by their technical and commercial colleagues as the project progresses.

**“Let’s get better at optimising assets before we touch them, and let’s get better at optimising assets before we leave them.”**

Philip Druce  
Head of Above & Below  
Ground Engineering  
Thames Water



This should be supported by investing in innovation, and transforming the way technology such as photogrammetry and video 3D modelling is used throughout the project life cycle, to **elicit in-depth, early feedback on scheme design and progress before spades hit the ground**.



**“Engineering construction digitally, gives operations an opportunity to look into and feedback on projects before you’ve committed to a physical product.”**

Tim Rutter

Head of AMP8 Transformation

Northumbrian Water Group



### Shape your team’s mindsets for AMP8

Implementing these structures, systems, and processes will only drive a high-performing collaborative environment if the people working within them are fully on board.

**There needs to be a mindset shift for leaders to optimise their people systems** with the same focus given to that of physical assets and processes.

To optimise people and behavioural systems, consider these key areas:

- **Time allocation:** Many managers waste valuable time micromanaging, reacting to daily crises, and operating in a reactive mode. The perennial leadership challenge is to help managers focus on strategic oversight and empowerment.
- **Change management:** Humans instinctively perceive change as a threat. While large-scale investments mitigate organisational risks, individual employees may experience increased personal uncertainty. Effective change management strategies are essential to help individuals adapt to new environments and technologies.
- **Decision-making:** Efficient decision-making drives project speed and quality. As complexity increases, it’s crucial to revisit and refine decision-making processes. Have you reviewed your decision-making processes in light of AMP8 demands through the lens of decision velocity?

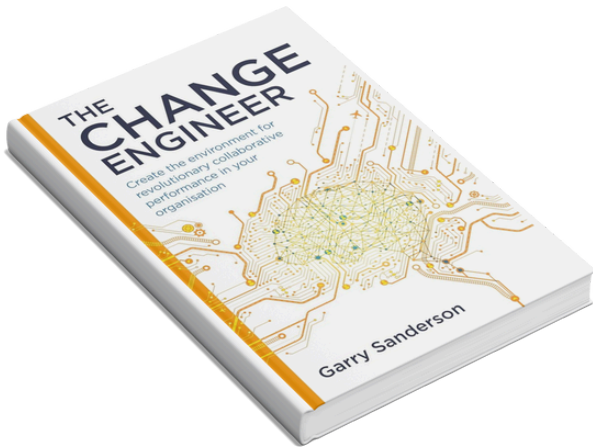
**“If you take any individual and load them up with change, pressure, and complexity, you’re creating a suboptimal condition for cognitive performance - it’s a recipe for cognitive overload.”**

Garry Sanderson

Managing Director

Visualyze Solutions





Garry Sanderson offers a framework and explores multiple approaches to these critical areas in his book "The Change Engineer," which can be found at the link below.

[Get your copy.](#)

## Shape your team's mindsets for AMP8

The industry-wide investment triggered by AMP8 presents a significant opportunity for positive advancements in the sector. However, maximising the benefits of this investment requires effective collaboration across tech-savvy teams that are enthusiastic about change.

If you'd like to discuss how we can help your organisation build a workforce capable of delivering your AMP8 ambitions, **get in touch with Alex Graham (alex.graham@reson8.group)**.