

Stephen Slessor Named Chair of British Water Amid Sector Transformation

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British Water, the supply chain membership organisation for the UK water industry, has appointed Stephen Slessor, Chief Executive Officer of RSE (Ross-shire Engineering), as its new chair. Slessor succeeds Dr Mark Fletcher, Director and Global Water Business Lead at Arup, at a time when the sector is undergoing significant structural and environmental shifts. The appointment marks a key moment in British Water's efforts to strengthen its leadership as the industry faces mounting regulatory, climate-related, and skills-based challenges.

Slessor brings over 25 years of experience to the role, with a career spanning engineering, digital construction, and strategic leadership. Since January 2024, he has served as Chief Executive of RSE, a firm focused on modular solutions for water and wastewater treatment. Under his leadership, RSE has expanded both within the UK and internationally. His extensive background also includes a 17-year tenure at Galliford Try, where he rose to Managing Director and played a central role in the 2021 merger with NMCN, forming the UK's largest contractor dedicated to water infrastructure.

On accepting the new role, Slessor stated, "I'm humbled to step into the role as chair of British Water as the water sector steps up to meet the most pressing challenges in the coming decades, whether that be related to climate, regulatory changes or skills development. The input and innovation of our growing membership is more critical than ever in delivering a more sustainable and resilient UK water ecosystem, and I will endeavour to champion the vital work of British Water at every turn."

Lila Thompson, Chief Executive of British Water, welcomed the appointment, highlighting Slessor's combination of deep industry expertise and innovative thinking. Stephen's passion for innovation and commitment to collaboration align strongly with the British Water mission of supporting a sustainable and high-performing water sector. I look forward to working with him as we continue to champion the voice of the supply chain and drive meaningful change across the industry," she said.

Slessor's leadership comes at a crucial time. His appointment follows the publication of the final report by the Independent Water Commission, which issued 88 recommendations aimed at reforming the UK water sector. Notably, the report echoed British Water's advocacy for long-term planning, improved coordination, and a clearer infrastructure pipeline. It also referenced findings from the organisation's annual *Water & Wastewater Company Performance* survey, its supply chain taskforce, and its cross-sector procurement working group.

As chair, Slessor will collaborate with the British Water Board to grow the organisation's membership and enhance its resilience. He will also play a role in holding the Government accountable for its commitments on skills development and opportunities within the water sector, ensuring benefits extend to the supply chain as well as to water utilities.

In addition to his operational roles, Slessor has contributed to industry governance through positions such as non-executive director of British Water, advisory board member of the

Scottish Futures Trust, and president of the Chartered Institute of Civil Engineering Surveyors (CICES).

British Water extended its appreciation to outgoing chair Dr Mark Fletcher, recognising his valuable leadership during a time of rapid sector evolution. His contributions helped steer the organisation through a period marked by increased scrutiny, regulatory updates, and the growing importance of environmental and infrastructure sustainability.