

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for environmental information. We appreciate your interest, and we want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR). As your request contained a number of specific questions, this response, restates each part of the request (in bold) and then follows this with our response.

**I was recently passing Thirlmere on the bus and noticed how close parts of the A591 appear to run to the reservoir, with the road sitting above the water on an embankment in places. It made me wonder how routine road runoff and any accidental fuel or oil spill would be prevented from entering the reservoir, particularly during heavy rain.**

**I understand there may already be drainage, containment and emergency-response arrangements in place, so I am not writing this as a complaint. I would just like to understand what information is held about how this risk is managed, especially given that Thirlmere is used as a public drinking-water source.**

**Please treat this as a request for environmental information under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.**

**Could you please provide information on the following:**

**1. Where road runoff goes**

**Does surface water runoff from the sections of the A591 adjacent to Thirlmere Reservoir drain directly or indirectly toward the reservoir, or is it collected by a formal drainage system?**

There are no United Utilities sewers on the A591 in the area around Thirlmere reservoir, and we are not responsible for the highway drainage. Should you require further information on the drainage here, I would recommend contacting Cumberland Council.

**2. Drainage and pollution-control measures**

**Are there any measures in place to stop road contaminants entering Thirlmere, such as gullies, kerbs, ditches, catchpits, oil interceptors/separators, settlement chambers, swales, filter drains, penstocks, shut-off valves or other containment systems?**

The A591 is managed by Cumberland Council, so United Utilities do not have any involvement in the placement or management of road gullies or highway drainage infrastructure in this area. With regards to pollution control measures within United Utilities control, we have a yellow pollution-control bin on site containing spill mats and other spill response equipment for use in the event of an

incident.

We also have a team of Catchment Controllers who regularly perform ranger activities throughout the catchment such as monitoring reservoirs to ensure safety, and conducting regular site inspections and water checks to pinpoint potential sources of pollution. These activities are key in ensuring that our raw water supplies remain free from any possible contamination.

If you would like any further information on the highway drainage, I would recommend contacting Cumberland Council. Its email address is [Information.Governance@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Information.Governance@cumberland.gov.uk).

### **3. Plans or asset records**

**Are there any drainage plans, outfall records, asset maps or schematics showing how runoff from the A591 beside Thirlmere is collected, treated, discharged or isolated?**

As above, as the drainage on the A591 is not owned or maintained by United Utilities, we are unfortunately unable to provide you with copies of any plans or asset records in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, as these are not held. If you would like further information on this, I would recommend contacting Cumberland Council.

### **4. Routine road contamination**

**Has United Utilities assessed routine road runoff contamination from the A591 near Thirlmere, including oil and fuel residues, tyre particles, brake dust, sediment, road salt/de-icer, metals or other highway-derived pollutants?**

We routinely sample the raw water at Thirlmere reservoir for a vast number of parameters. Additionally, we have a Drinking Water Safety Plan (DWSP) in place, which is a structured, evidence based approach to ensure drinking water remains safe at all times. This identifies any potential hazards or hazardous events, evaluates the risks they pose and sets out controls, monitoring and actions needed to protect water quality from catchment to customer.

Within the DWSP for the Thirlmere catchment, we have the following Hazardous Events that the risks described below could be recorded/scored against:

- Hydrocarbons
- Misconnection to surface water drain
- Pollutants from industrial or domestic waste
- Solvents from historic and current industrial or domestic activities

### **5. Fuel or tanker spill risk**

**Are there any risk assessments, emergency plans or incident-response procedures covering accidental fuel, oil, chemical or tanker spills on the A591 next to Thirlmere Reservoir?**

In the event of a contamination incident, the matter would be managed in accordance with our



Water for the North West

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incident management procedures, including assessment of the associated risks, implementation of mitigation measures to contain any contamination, collection and analysis of relevant samples, and coordination of all necessary internal and external communications.

**6. Drinking-water risk assessment**

**Is the A591 beside Thirlmere included in United Utilities' Drinking Water Safety Plan, catchment risk assessment, source protection assessment or any similar risk-management document?**

Yes, the A591 is included in the catchment boundaries for the Thirlmere DWSP.

**7. Responsibility and maintenance**

**Who is responsible for inspecting and maintaining any relevant drainage or pollution-control assets in this area — United Utilities, Cumberland Council, the Environment Agency, National Highways, a contractor, or another organisation?**

Cumberland Council are responsible for the A591. Should you require more information about the drainage or pollution control assets in the area, I would recommend contacting Cumberland Council, who should be able to confirm if this is its responsibility, or that of National Highways.

**8. Previous incidents**

**Are there any recorded fuel, oil, chemical, vehicle or highway-runoff pollution incidents from the A591 that affected, or had the potential to affect, Thirlmere Reservoir in the last ten years?**

There have been no instances of fuel, oil, chemical, vehicle or highway runoff pollution incidents from the A591 into Thirlmere reservoir in the last ten years.

**9. Recent reviews or lessons learned**

**Has any review been carried out following recent fuel/tanker spill incidents in Cumbria where soil decontamination or extended road closures were required, and were any lessons applied to the A591/Thirlmere area?**

As United Utilities have not been involved in any recent fuel / tanker spill incidents in Cumbria, we are unable to comment on this point. We would recommend contacting National Highways and Cumberland Council should you require any further information on this point.

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you're not satisfied with how we've handled it, you can request an internal review. To do this, please write to us at Environmental Information Office, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere, Warrington, WA5 3LP or email us at [EIIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:EIIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk), addressing your request to [REDACTED], and explaining why you're unhappy with our response. We'll be very happy to review your request and ensure we've done everything we can to assist you.



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Any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this response, and we will reply within 40 working days from receipt of the request for internal review.

Many thanks



We'd love to hear your feedback on how we handled your request! If you have a moment, please complete our short survey [here](#) – your input helps us improve our service.