

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.

For the period January 2024 to present, please provide:

1. The number of requests for new water supply connections received from data centres

United Utilities received no full applications for a new water main or service connection from data-centre developers during the period January 2024 to the present, and as such I'm unable to provide you with this information in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR.

We did, however, receive four water pre-development enquiries from data-centre developers. These are submissions made through our pre-development enquiry process and relate to potential future water supply connections.

None of these enquiries has progressed to a full connection application. Any water requirements provided through the enquiries remain indicative and may change as the proposed developments progress.

2. The actual volumetric water usage by data centres for each WRZ in your supply zone as Annual Average (ML/d) or however you record it.

Please see enclosed a copy of the annual water usage attached in Appendix 1.

3. The actual volumetric water usage by data centres for each WRZ in your supply zone per month (ML)

Please see enclosed a copy of the monthly water usage attached in Appendix 1.

4. The number approved, refused, withdrawn or pending.

None of the water pre-development enquiries has progressed to a full application for a new water main or service connection. Therefore, the number of full connection applications approved, refused, withdrawn or pending is zero in each category.

Pre-development enquiries are initial planning-stage submissions and are not classified using these

decision categories.

5. The estimated annual water demand associated with approved requests.

As above, there have been no approved requests and therefore we are unable to provide the estimated annual water demand in line with Regulation 12(4)(a). Any demands provided through water pre-development enquiries are indicative planning-stage requirements and have not been approved or committed for supply.

6. The WRZ / local authority area in which each proposed development is located.

The local authority areas for the proposed data-centre developments identified by United Utilities are included in our response to question 9. These developments were identified through water pre-development enquiries and planning engagement. None have progressed to a full application for a new water main or service connection.

7. Any assessment undertaken of the impact of those requests on water resource availability.

None of the formal water pre-development enquiries received from data-centre developers have yet progressed to a full application for a new water main or service connection. Consequently, no detailed site-specific water-resource assessment associated with a full connection application has been undertaken.

Indicative assessments have, however, been undertaken through the pre-development enquiry process and as part of United Utilities' wider strategic planning. These assessments do not constitute approval of a connection or reserve a particular volume of water for a development. The information provided by developers remains indicative and may change as their proposals, cooling technologies and operational requirements develop.

Where developers have provided indicative water requirements, these have been used in the assessment. For less mature proposals, potential demand has been estimated using information such as the proposed scale and electrical capacity of the development, benchmarks from comparable developments and assumptions about the type of cooling technology that may be used. A range of cooling scenarios has been considered to understand both potential average and peak water demand.

United Utilities accounts for future industrial and non-household growth within its Water Resources Management Plan. Forecast demand from economic development is included within our long-term assessment of water availability, helping us plan the resources and investment needed to support growth while maintaining secure supplies for existing customers.

In response to the significant increase in proposed data-centre development, particularly in Greater Manchester, United Utilities has developed a strategic growth case to support this level of development. This draws on indicative demand information provided through pre-development enquiries and, where developer information is not available, estimates based on the proposed scale

and energy consumption of developments and assumptions about the cooling technologies that may be used.

The growth case considers the potential cumulative demand and assesses the implications for water resources, treatment, storage and network capacity. It identifies how emerging demand could potentially be accommodated and includes proposals for investment in the wider water supply system. This growth case has been submitted to water regulator Ofwat for review and approval and we await its decision due in August.

These assumptions are reviewed regularly as developments progress and further information becomes available. If a proposal progresses to a full application for a new water main or service connection, it will require a detailed site-specific assessment considering the scale, location, timing, phasing and demand profile of the development, as well as water resource availability within the relevant Water Resource Zone and local infrastructure capacity.

When engaging with large non-household developers, we also apply an industrial water hierarchy. This process first considers opportunities to reduce demand through water efficiency and on-site reuse before assessing potential sources including rainwater, non-potable water, recycled water as a potential future option, and potable water.

8. Details of any policy specifying contractual maximum volumetric water usage by data centres

United Utilities does not have a data-centre-specific policy setting a standard contractual maximum volumetric water use. Large non-household requirements are assessed individually, taking account of the proposed demand profile, water resource availability and local treatment and network capacity. Any site-specific supply parameters or conditions are determined through the relevant connection and contractual processes.

9. Any planning pre-application enquiries or statutory consultee responses made by you in relation to proposed data centre developments, including the volumetric water demand stated in those applications, from January 2024 to present

Since January 2024, we have commented on four planning applications and one screening opinion request (where a planning application is in the process of being prepared) for data centres. Copies of comments made by United Utilities and other authorities are publicly available and can be found on the relevant planning authority's website. For ease, I have included these below, along with each of the planning reference numbers:

- [Find planning applications - Stockport Council](#) - Council ref DC/090411
- [View or comment on a planning application • Salford City Council](#) - Council ref PA/2024/1810
- [Planning – Fylde Council](#) - Council ref 24/0516
- [Search and View Planning Applications and Appeals](#) - Council refs DC/2025/01117 and DC/2025/01324

- [Search for planning applications | Rochdale Borough Council](#) - Council ref DC/26/1781

Whilst United Utilities is not a statutory consultee in the planning application process, we work closely with local authorities to provide comments on applications for planning permission where we think it is necessary to protect the impact on our operations.

Where risks are identified, planning applications are reviewed by the relevant UU experts to assess the risk to UU's assets and/or services and to provide advice on how to mitigate the risk through the planning application process.

Our comments must, however, reflect our statutory obligations as a regulated water company, one of which is that we must allow new connections to our network. Whilst we do not make the ultimate decision on whether a development is acceptable or not, this lies with the local planning authority, , we do review applications for planning permission and provide comments where necessary. These comments include recommending planning conditions to control the approach to drainage and seeking to secure foul only connections to the public sewer wherever possible. Foul only connections are important as they help to keep the impact on our wastewater network assets to a minimum, as surface water (rain water) flows can be much larger than foul flows.

The local authority is ultimately the decision-maker for planning applications, and it does not have to reflect UU's comments or recommended conditions. In almost all cases, any UU responses will be published to the local authority's planning portal.

10. For the period January 2024 to present, all new non-household water supply connection applications where the requested volumetric demand exceeds 500m³/day or MI/d, including:

- **the type of development stated by the applicant;**
- **the WRZ;**
- **projected volumetric demand;**
- **status (approved/refused/pending/withdrawn);**
- **and the estimated annual demand associated with each approved application.**

Please see below a copy of the information we hold for all new non-household water supply applications for the requested period. I can confirm that all of these have been connected and as such, their status is closed. We do not hold specific information regarding the type of development or estimated annual demand for each of these, therefore we are unable to provide these in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR.



Water for the North West

United Utilities Water Limited
Haweswater House
Lingley Mere Business Park
Lingley Green Avenue
Great Sankey
Warrington WA5 3LP

Telephone: 01925 237000
unitedutilities.com

Requested connection	Water Supply Zone (WSZ)	l/s requested	m3/day
1x 110mm connection with 80mm SJ int meter	WSZ 286	14	1209.6
1 x 90mm PE connection with 50mm External Boundary Meter	WSZ 178	7.78	672.192
110mm BP Conn to existing 160mm BP with 50mm External meter	WSZ 314	7	604.8
1 x 110mm BP Connection with 80mm External Combi and Strainer	WSZ 286	7.4	639.36
1 x 160 mm BP Connection with 100mm External meter	WSZ 243	8	691.2

If you do not have this information please tell me what information you do hold about data centres in your area and their current and future use. How are you planning for the increased demand they represent?

Appendix 1 contains data relating to existing data centres that UU currently supplies and includes the five-year water-consumption information held for those sites.

United Utilities has received a number of water pre-development enquiries from data-centre developers. These are submitted during the initial planning stage and allow UU to provide early advice about how water services could be provided, whether adequate water may be available and whether network infrastructure or reinforcement may need to be considered. They are formal submissions through the pre-development enquiry process, but they are not full applications for a new water main or service connection.

Where a developer has provided an indicative water requirement through a pre-development enquiry, this information is used in our strategic planning. For other potential developments where no developer-provided requirement is available, we estimate potential demand using information about the proposed scale and energy consumption of the development, together with assumptions about the cooling technology that may be used.

Different cooling technologies can have significantly different water requirements. We therefore consider a range of potential cooling scenarios when estimating potential average and peak demand. All such figures remain planning assumptions and are reviewed as more information becomes available about cooling technology, energy use, phasing and operational requirements.

12. What methodology do you use to forecast demand from data centres in your Water Resource Management Plan? Have you identified data centres as a separate demand category in its WRMP forecasting? If not, under what category is their demand captured?

Data centres are not identified as a separate demand category within WRMP24. Existing data-centre consumption is captured within the wider non-household demand category.

As the scale and pace of proposed data-centre developments have increased, UU has supplemented this approach with a bottom-up assessment of anticipated developments. For more mature proposals, we would use demand information supplied by developers. For less mature proposals, indicative demand is modelled using available information, including electrical capacity and benchmarks from comparable developments.

The assessment considers potential average and peak demand, location, timing, phasing, development certainty and cumulative growth. Proposed demand is assessed against water resource availability in the relevant Water Resource Zone and against treatment, storage and distribution capacity. The assumptions are reviewed regularly and will inform the WRMP annual review process and the development of WRMP29 as proposals become more certain.

13. Do you require large non-household customers with projected demand exceeding 500m³/day to enter into a demand-limiting SLA or contractual maximum consumption agreement? If so, how many such agreements are currently in place, and what are the total contracted maximum daily volumes?

By way of additional context for this question, non-household water consumption in the North West has substantially reduced over the last few decades. In 1992/93 reported non-household consumption was 580 million litres per day (Ml/d), whereas in 2025/26 it was 340Ml/d, a fall of over 40%.

In most cases, we do not apply a mandatory contractual limit to non-household customers. There are many practical reasons for this including:

- Setting limits on supply would limit economic growth – our duty as a water undertaker, in respect of non-household customers, is to ensure that we are able to meet the necessary demands of non-household customers, and hence not to be barrier to economic growth;
- Non-household customers are generally budget/profit motivated, and hence already incentivised to avoid excessive discretionary water use; and
- Given the wide variation in non-household customers and their consumption patterns (across varying timescales), setting such limits in an appropriately fair way would require bespoke pricing and supply contracts, which are complex and costly to set up and to administer. Non-household customers operate in a competitive water retail market. and setting up such contracts would be an additional cost for the water company, the non-household customer and the water retailers. This additional cost and administrative burden, unless well justified by specific circumstances, may be viewed as harming the retail market. As a monopoly incumbent water company, we are required to ensure that we are not placing unnecessary undue burdens onto this competitive market.

However, in a limited number of cases, we do have bespoke “special agreement” contracts with non-household customers and their retailers – this generally applies to larger customers that use more

than 500M3/day, albeit not all such customers have bespoke contracts. We also have bulk water supply arrangements with other water companies (that are also significant supplies of water), which are all subject to bespoke pricing and supply contracts. Whilst we do aim to include such terms into any new bespoke contracts, many of the existing contracts pre-date privatisation, and hence we would only have the opportunity to introduce such terms upon contract renewal. Within most of these contracts we apply either:

- A stated maximum supply value – this may be stated as a maximum daily or annual flow (or a combination of these); or
- A price escalation mechanism, such that the price per m3 of water significantly increases above a certain level, to disincentivise the customer from using more water.

These contracts are subject to commercial negotiations between the parties, and hence we will not divulge details of the specific contents of these contracts.

14. Please provide the number of supply points in your portfolio identified under SIC codes 62020 and 62090, their total annual consumption in 2023 and 2024, and the number that are data centres to the best of your knowledge.

We do not have any supply points in these SIC codes. As such, we are unable to provide you with this information in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, as the information is not held.

15. From January 2024 to present, how many customers have proactively identified themselves as data centres in correspondence with you, whether during connection applications, demand management discussions, WRMP consultations, or other engagement?

As per our response to Q9, there have been five customers in total who have identified themselves as data centres. This has been through the early stages of the planning process.

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 EIRRequests@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.

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
[REDACTED]

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.