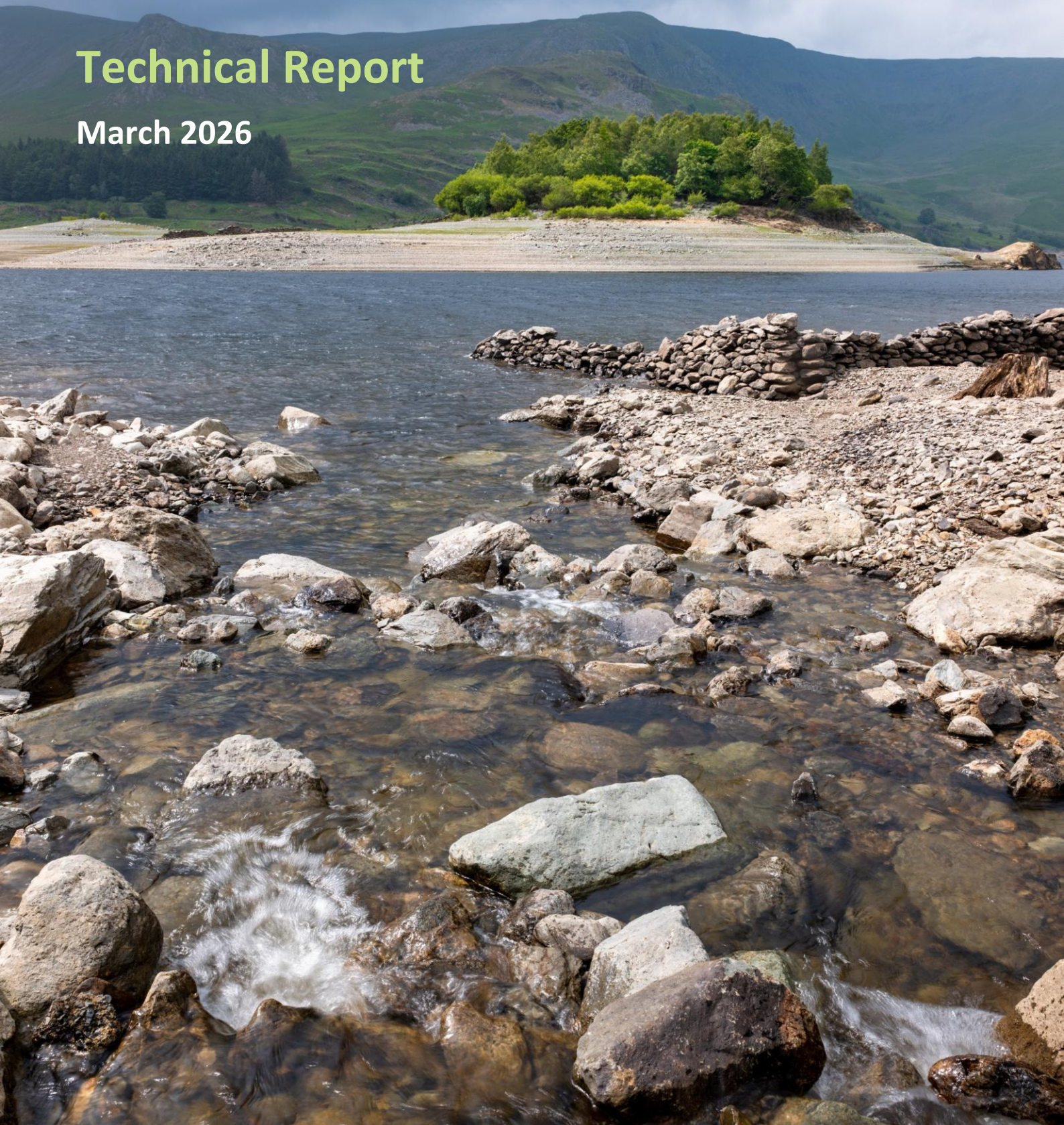


Draft Drought Plan 27

Extreme drought measures

Technical Report

March 2026



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1. Introduction

If we experience an extreme drought we will do everything in our power to avoid the need for level 4 severe drought restrictions. This report outlines the extreme drought management actions we could implement to maintain a resilient supply during such a drought and minimise any impact on customers and the environment.

The extreme drought management actions outlined are considered technically feasible, meaning they are realistic and should be achievable in practice. However, in most cases their effectiveness under extreme drought conditions remains untested. Their viability has been assessed as far as reasonably possible, drawing on available data and operational understanding. Their implementation depends on the severity of drought conditions and the speed at which we need to respond. To support timely activation, we have developed potential lead-in times for each action. All drought actions are designed to be temporary and generally will not result in a permanent increase in available water supply or reduction in demand. This distinguishes them from the longer-term options set out in our Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP24)¹.

Since our 2022 drought plan, we have taken the opportunity to expand our demand management actions to help delay the need for emergency measures aimed at reducing household and domestic water use. These actions focussed on extreme drought include the potential removal of non-statutory exceptions from temporary use bans and non-essential use bans. We will also increase the promotion and provision of water-saving devices and efficient appliances, and, where appropriate, water butts to encourage greater household water reuse (see Table 1). In addition, targeted smart metering initiatives will support efficient water use and enhance customer awareness during drought conditions.

A principle of this approach is that demand-side measures should be deployed before more extreme supply-side interventions, as they are often more sustainable and less environmentally impacting, ensuring supply-side options are only used when necessary. This document defines the scope of potential actions based on feasibility assessments, details the selected suite of measures in Table 1, and sets out their prioritisation using a multi-criteria assessment. It includes key assumptions and environmental assessments. Finally, regional connectivity and coordination with neighbouring water companies is considered to ensure a joined-up response.

¹ [Final WRMP24 Main Report](#)

2. Scope of actions

As drought severity escalates, the full range of powers available under ordinary drought order legislation will be considered, under Section 74(2) of the Water Resources Act (1991). Recognising the potential need for such measures, we have proactively explored a wide range of options to manage extreme drought scenarios. In preparing for escalating drought conditions, we have taken an unconstrained approach to option identification, ensuring that all potential demand and supply actions were considered (Figure 1). Only measures deemed technically feasible, practical to implement, and achievable within a reasonable lead time have been incorporated as level 3 extreme drought measures.

Following this, each option was then subject to a structured screening process to assess its viability and effectiveness, based on a set of clearly defined criteria:

- Water saving or water supply benefit potential
- Speed of implementation
- Cost and resource requirements
- Environmental impact
- Customer impact
- Regulatory compliance and deliverability
- Scalability

This process ensures that the potential extreme drought actions are not only effective but also deliverable within the constraints of a worsening drought scenario. It has enabled us to prioritise the most feasible and impactful options, supporting a response that is balanced, proportionate, and adaptable to evolving conditions. All feasible actions identified through this process are listed in Table 1.

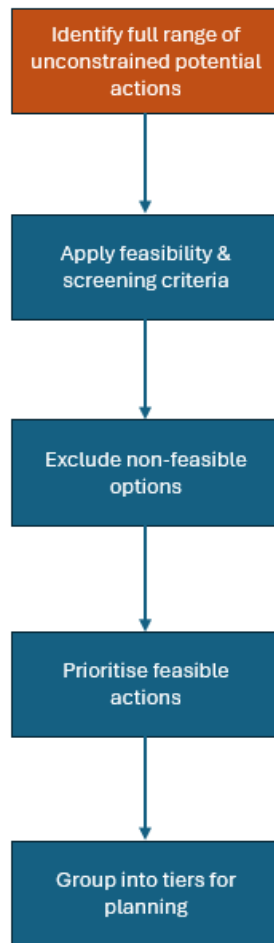
As part of our screening process, we considered a range of measures to encourage water efficiency, such as higher tariffs for high-consumption users and reward schemes for those who reduce their usage. While our smart metering programme over the next five-year investment and planning period (AMP8) presents opportunities to monitor real-time consumption and provide customer feedback, it is still too early to determine the feasibility of implementing measures such as tiered tariffs or incentive-based reward schemes. These approaches require further assessment to evaluate their practicality, impact, and customer acceptance before they can be considered for implementation.

Similarly, maritime tankering has been screened out as it involves significant logistical challenges, high costs, and would provide only limited volumes relative to demand, meaning it cannot be demonstrated as a viable measure at this stage to address shortages in an extreme drought.

The point at which the feasible actions are triggered, and the benefits expected, will depend on prevailing water resource levels, demand, and weather forecasts (rainfall and temperature). In deciding whether to implement any extreme drought action, both environmental and customer impacts will be assessed alongside the lead times required. The order and priority of actions will therefore vary by event, with some requiring earlier consideration due to their implementation timescales. To aid planning, we have ordered the actions based on a multi-criteria assessment (see section 3.1) and provided indicative timescales to reflect the complexity of delivery.

Table 1 does not represent an exhaustive list of options. In the event of a drought, additional actions may be investigated and implemented to reduce the likelihood of reaching drought level 4. Several of the measures listed are already referenced at earlier drought levels in the drought plan; however, we will consider extending their use if conditions escalate towards level 4. In addition, we will undertake a further review of the scope of actions following lessons learned from the 2025 drought, ensuring that the plan remains up to date and informed by the most recent operational experience.

Figure 1: Process of identifying extreme drought measures



3. Extreme drought actions

The range of potential extreme drought actions we can use to delay or avoid level 4 emergency restrictions includes large-scale media and communications campaigns, removing non-statutory exceptions for temporary use bans and non-essential use bans, rapid mobilisation of temporary pipelines, bulk supply transfers and applications for drought orders (Table 1). These actions will be implemented temporarily until storage recovers. While these measures are inherently more complex and may involve trade-offs, they form an important part of our contingency planning to ensure resilience under the most challenging conditions.

We have a comprehensive suite of demand and supply-side measures available to manage severe droughts, however operational experience with the most extreme supply-side options is limited, for example the use of reservoir deadwater storage², large-scale bulk supply transfers, and additional powers available under drought orders (for potable sources). As a result, this creates uncertainty about mobilisation lead times, operational reliability, and the effective volume of water that can be delivered through these actions under varying drought conditions.

In alignment with WRMP24, the implementation point for level 4 emergency restrictions is set at reservoir dead water storage. For further information, see section 4.6 (Supply Forecast, WRMP24).³

3.1 Prioritisation and tiering

We have prioritised the implementation of our actions based on the multi-criteria assessment, which is based on:

- Potential benefit
- Environmental impact
- Implementation readiness
- Scalability
- Customer impact

While all criteria are considered, the assessment is weighted in favour of potential benefit, reflecting a focus on prioritising actions that deliver the greatest overall impact. This approach helps to reduce reliance on further measures that may involve greater uncertainty or risk. Environmental considerations remain integral to the assessment, and higher-priority actions are those that offer strong benefits while minimising environmental impact and demonstrating a high level of planning and readiness. Such actions are more likely to be delivered effectively, with fewer unintended consequences. This prioritisation also helps manage the risk of progressing interventions that may ultimately prove unnecessary should drought conditions improve.

Based on the prioritisation, the options are grouped into tiers based on their risk, complexity, cost and resource requirements (Tier 1-3). This tiered approach helps balance the potential consequences of acting too early against the risks associated with delaying a response. Potential relatively lower risk interventions, such as the removal of non-statutory exceptions to temporary use bans and non-essential use bans and network changes are categorised as Tier 1 and prioritised for early deployment. Relatively higher-risk or capital-intensive measures, such as drought orders, are placed in Tier 2 and Tier 3 and reserved for later stages of response.

3.2 Benefits

It is impossible to accurately quantify the impact of individual actions on demand reduction, as their effects can vary depending on context and implementation, particularly in absence of consumption data for such actions.

² Reservoir deadwater storage is the portion of water at the bottom of a reservoir that is kept back and not normally available for supply, except in extreme circumstances.

³ [Final WRMP24 Technical Report - Supply forecast](#)

Where it has been possible to quantify benefits with some degree of confidence, these have been included in Table 1. However, it is important to recognise the uncertainty inherent in these assessments. Factors such as customer behaviour, varying weather conditions, data resolution, and the interaction between multiple drought interventions mean that observed savings may not always be directly attributable to specific actions. This uncertainty is a key reason why we have been unable to quantify benefits for all actions at this stage.

Further detail on how we account for this uncertainty is detailed in the 'Testing our plan' technical report, which outlines how we build flexibility and robustness into our drought response planning, recognising that the effectiveness of individual measures may vary in practice.

Table 1: Potential extreme drought actions, ordered according to prioritisation based on the multi-criteria assessment. Timescales are indicative.

Type of action	Summary of action	Brief description of action	Trigger for action to be used	Potential benefit in water saving	Comments/Barriers	Environmental impacts	Timescales (estimated lead in time to implement the action)
Demand	Media & Communications	Hard hitting media campaigns such as radio and TV advertisements to support both household and non-household customers to significantly restrict water use. We would do more to target our messaging and increase the frequency and severity of the messaging	Tier 1	Fast acting and wide-reaching if message is urgent, clear and frequent. Drives awareness and behaviour at scale, especially in combination with restrictions	Media and communications would be continued throughout the drought event. The frequency and severity of messages would increase as the event progressed	No environmental impact	1-2 weeks
Demand	Removal of non-statutory exceptions under temporary use bans and non-essential use bans	Non-statutory exceptions under Temporary Use Bans and non-essential use ordinary drought orders will be removed, while statutory exceptions will be retained in accordance with legal requirements. During a severe drought, non-statutory exceptions to temporary use bans will apply to all Tier 1–3 Priority Service customers to support water conservation	Tier 1	The potential water saving would depend on the level of customer participation and the scope of exceptions removed. While precise quantification would require modelling, this measure is expected to achieve moderate to high water savings due to reduced discretionary and non-essential use across customer groups	Potential customer unacceptability if they are physically unable to make adjustments (due to health reasons) to use a water can/bucket safely. However, in this scenario, we would advise these customers to avoid these activities, as the temporary use ban categories of use can be considered nonessential at this stage of drought, with the aim of conserving more water to avoid or delay level 4 restrictions	No environmental impact	1-2 weeks
Demand	Reduced water consumption by large commercial customers (voluntary)	Liaise with large commercial customers to encourage them to reduce their water consumption or change their maintenance schedule	Tier 1	Potential high benefit from a small number of users. A relatively small number of large customers account for a disproportionate share of commercial water use	We would contact via the business retailers, who are required to co-operate with the wholesaler under the	No environmental impact	2-3 weeks

Type of action	Summary of action	Brief description of action	Trigger for action to be used	Potential benefit in water saving	Comments/Barriers	Environmental impacts	Timescales (estimated lead in time to implement the action)
				<p>For example, food processing, hospitality, data centres, or manufacturing.</p> <p>Voluntary nature means uptake and water savings are uncertain; results vary by sector, site, and engagement quality. Some businesses may already be operating efficiently or have limited ability to reduce demand further</p>	Wholesale Contract Schedule (Process E7) ⁴		
Demand	Water saving devices and appliances	Increase of free or subsidised water-saving devices: Distribute water-efficient showerheads, aerators, and hose nozzles. Partner with retailers to provide discounts on water-efficient appliances like dishwashers and washing machines	Tier 1	These can deliver good savings in the home, especially with showers and taps, but the uptake rate can be slow unless heavily promoted. Good for long-term behaviour change, but less immediate in drought unless rollout is rapid and targeted	Through enhanced water audits in drought-affected areas, we will ensure the installation of water-efficiency devices. Where appropriate, we will provide water butts. Additionally, we will prioritise water efficiency visits for high-consumption properties and those with known leaks	No environmental impact	1-4 weeks
Demand	Pause planned maintenance conditioning water distribution mains	Pause robustflushing and proactive conditioning of water mains	Tier 2	Equivalent to approximately 0.5 Ml/d saving per month	Stand-down time to contractors and impact to customers would be minimised by being notified in advance. Increased risk of potential discolouration due to lack of maintenance and negatively impacting the	No environmental impact	3 weeks

⁴ [MOSL Market Codes](#)

Type of action	Summary of action	Brief description of action	Trigger for action to be used	Potential benefit in water saving	Comments/Barriers	Environmental impacts	Timescales (estimated lead in time to implement the action)
					Taste, Smell & Appearance performance measure		
Demand	Water efficiency and metering	<p>Reprioritising smart meter installs to drought-sensitive zones. Water efficiency and metering - specific targeting in high demand areas.</p> <p>The current programme involves externally installing the meter and working with the supplier based on a 3-month work package, however during drought and under extreme circumstances changes to the schedule can be accommodated within 1 - 2months</p>	Tier 2	The benefits depend on the scale of implementation, the location of the drought, and the available opportunities to reduce demand	<p>Meter penetration within our supply area is currently around 50% for households. By 2030 500,000 new meters will be installed for existing household customers, increasing our meter penetration to 60% by 2030. This represents 30% of the total meters required to reach 90% full meter penetration by 2045.</p> <p>Whilst we may not be proposing to increase metering on the basis that we have our largest rollout programme ever to be delivered by 2030, we would review our deployment strategy to ensure we are rolling out meters in areas that will minimise the impact of the particular drought occurring. Higher smart meter penetration will enhance drought resilience by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enabling targeted restrictions instead of broad bans. 	No environmental impact	4 weeks

Type of action	Summary of action	Brief description of action	Trigger for action to be used	Potential benefit in water saving	Comments/Barriers	Environmental impacts	Timescales (estimated lead in time to implement the action)
					<p>- Providing more frequent and granular data to monitor the effectiveness of drought response measures, such as temporary use bans and detect leaks</p>		
Supply	Regional actions	Engage with Water Resources West (WRW) and Water Resources North (WRN) to coordinate extreme drought response and support mutual aid	Tier 1	Indirect – improves efficiency, alignment, and access to shared resources	Through our links with Water Resources West and Water Resources North we would look to where water use plans across sectors could be used to share resources, and support/combine drought order applications. For Water Resources West, this is detailed in our ‘Water Resources West’ technical report, which details how we would all work together to support each other during a drought	No environmental impact - action promotes coordination rather than physical interventions	Dependent on location, drought event and benefit required
Supply	Network changes	Implementation of significant network modifications such as temporary overland pipes into water treatment works or emergency interconnections to transfer water between and within demand management zones	Tier 1- When local supplies are under severe stress and water needs to be transferred within or between demand management zones	Variable - depending on configuration and distance	May require road closures, landowner permissions, and construction. Planning and logistics can be complex, especially over long distances. Invasive Non-Native species, potential water quality impacts and customer acceptability risks	Low however potential local short term construction impacts	2-4 weeks

Type of action	Summary of action	Brief description of action	Trigger for action to be used	Potential benefit in water saving	Comments/Barriers	Environmental impacts	Timescales (estimated lead in time to implement the action)
Supply	Raw water supply	Reduction of raw water use for non-potable purposes (e.g. industrial or agricultural) by negotiating a revised split of potable and non-potable use of abstraction	Tier 1	Site-specific – depends on volume reallocated from non-potable to potable use	Requires agreement with other abstractors and regulators. May be constrained by existing contractual arrangements or industrial process requirements. Option may need to be linked with alternative supply actions (e.g. temporary network changes) to maintain supply to key industries	Likely minimal if non-potable use is reduced. However, potential knock-on socio-economic impacts	Days to weeks
Supply	Use of reservoir deadwater	Use of reservoir storage below the normal lowest operating level (“deadwater”)	Tier 2	Site-specific depending on reservoir size and volume available	May be limited to sources without statutory or ecological flow obligations. Requires assessment of water quality and operational feasibility	Low. May affect water quality (e.g. increased turbidity, temperature or algal risk)	1-2 weeks
Supply	Trades/transfers	Coordinate with adjacent companies to share water via trades or bulk transfers	Tier 2	Would be determined on a case-by-case basis taking into account current resource position and water availability	We would approach neighbouring water companies for short term trades and transfers of water during a drought where water is available. We would also review bulk transfers already in place	Possible environmental impact which would be assessed before use	Dependent on location, drought event and benefit required
Supply	Drought orders	Apply for temporary powers to modify abstraction, discharge, supply conditions or restrict water use	Tier 3	Would be determined on a case-by-case basis taking account current resource position and water availability	Under Section 74(2) of the Water Resources Act 1991, we would apply drought order powers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> modify or suspend abstraction and discharge conditions, 	Potential for environmental impacts, however actions would be prioritised to minimise these, starting	Timings will vary depending on the urgency of the situation. Normally within 28 days

Type of action	Summary of action	Brief description of action	Trigger for action to be used	Potential benefit in water saving	Comments/Barriers	Environmental impacts	Timescales (estimated lead in time to implement the action)
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take water from specified sources, reduce compensation flows, enable abstraction from alternative sources, and restrict water use under the Drought Direction 2011. <p>All actions would be subject to environmental assessment, including Water Framework Directive compliance, and limited to sources beneficial to the current drought event. Any drought orders implemented would be incorporated into future drought plans</p>	with those that have the lowest impact	
Supply	Mobile treatment plants	Use of modular, containerised treatment units to treat raw water from alternative sources for temporary potable supply	Tier 2	Typically 1–5 MI/d per unit	Requires access to suitable raw water and connection to the network. May need planning and permits. Often supported by temporary infrastructure. We would consider temporary mobile plants to support dosing to enable the use of poorer quality raw water	Localised impacts depending on abstraction and waste disposal	4 weeks +

Type of action	Summary of action	Brief description of action	Trigger for action to be used	Potential benefit in water saving	Comments/Barriers	Environmental impacts	Timescales (estimated lead in time to implement the action)
Supply	Recycled water	Use of recycled water to support non-potable demands (e.g. industrial use) or as a substitute for compensation flows, freeing up potable supplies (where feasible)	Tier 3	Site-specific – depends on location, treatment level and end use	Potential public acceptability and regulatory / legal challenges to overcome. Non-potable use more feasible but requires infrastructure and permitting	Varied between sites. May reduce river baseflows where treated wastewater currently supports downstream ecology; risk of flow or water quality impacts if not carefully managed	Dependent on location, drought event and benefit required
Supply	Temporary desalination	Deployment of temporary, containerised desalination units to treat brackish or sea water	Tier 3	1–5 Ml/d (site-specific)	High capital and operational costs. Siting dependent on access to suitable water sources (e.g. coastal or estuarine). Requires planning and environmental permits	Potential local impact from brine discharge	Minimum 3 months
Supply	Fast-track long-term sources or schemes	Acceleration of planned water resource schemes (e.g. new boreholes, transfers, treatment upgrades) where feasible to support short-term needs	Tier 3- Where drought conditions justify bringing forward investment to protect supply resilience	Scheme-dependent – potentially significant if fully operational	May require regulatory approval, funding reallocation, or procurement changes. Not all schemes will be technically or environmentally ready for acceleration	Varies by scheme – potential for short-term construction or abstraction impacts depending on location and status	Highly variable – from several weeks (if ‘shovel-ready’) to many months depending on scheme maturity.

4. Assumptions

Our planning for extreme drought actions is built on a series of practical operational and environmental assumptions. These inform our ability to respond quickly and responsibly during extreme drought events.

- For cross-catchment transfers, we assume that existing interconnection infrastructure is available and operational, or that temporary solutions such as mobile pumps or overland pipework can be deployed as needed. It is assumed that the donor catchment has sufficient resilience to support these transfers without compromising its environmental condition or supply security. Additionally, any differences in water chemistry between source and receiving waters are expected to be managed within existing treatment capacities or through temporary measures.
- Where supply-side actions require Drought Permits or Drought Orders, we assume that regulatory approval will be granted provided there is clear evidence of risk to public water supply and all reasonable alternatives have been considered. Applications will be supported by environmental assessments, operational justifications, and forecast data demonstrating the need. The typical application and determination period of up to 6 weeks has been factored into the timing of drought triggers and pre-application engagement. For urgent or fast-track requests, it is assumed that regulators will work closely with us to expedite the process if feasible.
- Environmental considerations are integral to the planning and delivery of all drought actions. We are committed to complying with all relevant environmental legislation, including the Water Framework Directive, Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations. Each extreme drought option undergoes a review to determine the appropriate level of environmental assessment. For higher-risk actions, particularly those affecting designated sites such as SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites, or SSSIs, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be undertaken and agreed with Natural England or Natural Resources Wales.
- We recognise that our extreme supply actions are unlikely to be application-ready to the same extent as our other supply actions. However, to ensure they remain viable, we plan to use early drought levels to support timely preparation and ensure they are available when needed. Where time constraints prevent a full environmental assessment in advance, a proportionate or rapid assessment may be applied, supported by evidence from previous assessments, catchment knowledge, and recent monitoring data. Any reduced assessment effort will be clearly justified and proportional to the scale, duration, and environmental sensitivity of the proposed action and discussed with the Environment Agency and others as applicable. Appropriate mitigation measures—such as fish rescues, flow controls, or temporary habitat creation—will be identified in advance, alongside necessary environmental monitoring before, during, and after implementation.
- Early and ongoing engagement with regulators is central to our approach. We will consult the Environment Agency and other regulators (e.g. Natural Resources Wales and Natural England) where applicable well in advance of implementing extreme drought actions, particularly where environmental impacts or regulatory constraints may arise. This includes sharing assumptions, agreeing the scope of environmental assessments, and understanding requirements for expedited approvals. For actions involving designated sites, engagement with Natural England will ensure safeguards are in place. Where drinking water quality could be affected, the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) will be notified early to assess and mitigate risks. Additionally, we will engage local authorities and other stakeholders where actions may impact public access, fisheries, agriculture, or other sectors.

In summary, our extreme drought actions are based on tested operational assumptions, current environmental data, and a risk-based approach. These measures are only used in the most severe situations but are an important part of our overall drought resilience planning. By planning ahead and working closely with regulators, we aim to implement these actions promptly, safely, and with proper environmental safeguards.

5. Regional co-ordination

During periods of extreme drought, it is essential that water companies collaborate closely to deliver a coordinated and effective response. Our four-step approach is based on early engagement, aligned planning, clear and consistent communication, and operational cooperation with neighbouring companies and the wider water sector.

1. Planning and coordination

We actively participate in Regional Drought Groups (RDGs), which bring together water companies, regulators, and other stakeholders. These groups play a crucial role in aligning drought triggers, agreeing on appropriate response measures, and sharing real-time data and insights. This coordination at the catchment level helps to ensure a consistent approach to drought management that reflects local conditions and challenges.

At the national level, we contribute to the National Drought Group (NDG), helping to align our local and regional activities with the broader sector strategy. Additionally, through collaboration in Water Resources West, we agree on common assumptions and drought scenarios with neighbouring companies. This shared approach helps maintain consistency across regional plans, reduces duplication of effort, and strengthens overall water resource resilience.

2. Operational alignment and resource sharing

In areas where supply systems or catchments cross company boundaries, we coordinate closely with neighbouring water companies to manage abstractions, transfers, and other operational activities. This cooperation helps protect sensitive environments and ensures decisions are made in the best interests of the wider water system.

At this stage of a drought, we will explore opportunities for mutual support, including temporary resource sharing, operational assistance, or joint logistics. Any such arrangements will be carefully considered for practicality and potential environmental impact before implementation.

3. Consistent communication

Clear and consistent communication between water companies is vital during droughts, especially in areas where supply boundaries overlap or where customers are served by different providers. We work closely with neighbouring companies to coordinate the timing and messaging of key drought measures, such as temporary use bans, to minimise confusion and help water-saving campaigns reach their full potential.

While consistent messaging is important during the earlier drought stages like temporary use bans, it becomes even more necessary if the drought progresses beyond level 3, when additional demand reduction actions are introduced. Coordinated communication helps customers stay informed about the situation and supports efforts to reduce water use when it's most needed.

By collaborating on our messaging, we aim to keep customers well informed and engaged, which is essential for managing water supplies effectively throughout challenging drought periods.

4. Ongoing collaboration and learning

Throughout drought events, we maintain regular contact with regulators, neighbouring companies, and sector partners to share updates, align approaches, and make sure decisions reflect the latest information and best practices.

Following drought periods, we actively participate in sector-wide reviews and knowledge sharing to identify lessons learned. This continuous improvement helps strengthen the resilience of water supplies and improves our collective readiness for future drought challenges.

6. Emergency drought plans

A drought emergency is declared when there is a significant risk that restrictions to the public water supply may be required. Emergency Drought Plans set out the emergency procedures required to manage an extreme shortfall in water supplies and enable the introduction of the most severe customer restrictions (e.g. rationing of water).

To implement such actions, an Emergency Drought Order (EDO) would be required. Unlike other types of drought orders, which are primarily used to amend abstraction licences to allow additional water to be taken from the environment, an EDO is specifically concerned with demand-side restrictions.

An EDO provides the legal authority to introduce extreme customer restrictions, including the suspension of normal household supplies. Currently our level of service for EDOs is once in 200 years on average (a 0.5% annual chance), and as set out in our 2024 Water Resources Management Plan this will improve to 1 in 500 years on average (a 0.2% annual chance) by 2039. This reflects how rare such measures should be required and only as a last resort. In the UK, emergency measures have been used only once in recorded history, during the 1976 drought, when prolonged dry conditions led to widespread water shortages. At that time, households in parts of England and Wales were required to collect water from street standpipes due to critically low reservoir and river levels.

In drought conditions, we operate in line with our statutory Drought Plan and use all available powers to prevent the need to activate our Emergency Drought Plans. Before moving to emergency response arrangements, we will already have put in place all suitable measures to reduce water demand and to increase available supply. These measures will remain in place during the emergency phase unless they are replaced by specific emergency actions.

We have already developed detailed Demand Management Zone (DMZ) contingency plans. These set out practical, operational actions that can be taken if normal supply arrangements come under pressure, helping us maintain network resilience and safeguard essential water services. We are developing our Emergency Drought Plans in parallel with this draft drought plan and provide detail about what they include below.

We will trigger our Emergency Drought Plans when we are within 30 days of reaching drought level 4. At that point, we will begin taking actions to either delay or prepare for when water supplies to customer taps may need to be disconnected. This decision point will allow for flexibility to trigger our emergency plans either earlier or in some cases later, depending on the drought conditions at the time. In addition, the decision point will allow for sufficient time for actions to be implemented and effective to reduce the likelihood of no longer being able to abstract water from sources to supply customers.

Our Emergency Drought Plans will also include the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the drought emergency response from our company, along with a summary of the type of actions we will implement and when.

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