WRMP29 Call for Options

Preliminary Market Engagement Notice

Additional Information

1 Introduction

We are developing our next Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP29), which will set out how we manage water resources to meet demand from 2030-2090. This plan will ensure that we continue to provide a reliable, sustainable, and good quality water supply to meet the needs of our customers and the environment. Our WRMP will be developed in collaboration with Water Resources West (WRW), the regional planning group established to develop a regional water resources plan for the West of England and part of Wales. This collaboration ensures that all member companies take a consistent approach to the key components of their WRMPs that inform the regional plan, including the identification of water resource options.

As part of the process, we will identify possible options to reduce demand for water or increase supply of water. In doing so, we want to explore opportunities for collaborating on reducing demand for water or sharing water resources. At this stage in the process, we invite stakeholders, suppliers, and innovators, to share their ideas and help shape the future of water in the North West.

It's also worth noting that, as part of wastewater planning and the development of our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP), we will be undertaking a similar process of identifying options to, for example, help us improve surface water management or manage nutrients across catchments. If you would like more information about our wastewater planning, please contact us at DWMP@uuplc.co.uk.

2 Options identification

Through the options identification process, we want to explore opportunities such as but not limited to:

- Demand reduction technology and options e.g. leakage reduction technologies and water efficiency
- New bulk supply contracts
- Shared asset ownership
- Sharing or trading water with water company/non-water company providers (other users of water)

Suppliers of solutions to reduce demand for water could be from organisations or individuals that could provide:

1. Innovative solutions to how our customers can reduce consumption through metering;
2. New technologies or devices that can be installed in our supply system or customers' properties to reduce water consumption or losses of water;
3. Other demand management activities, such as customer education or audits of water consumption;
4. Innovative approaches to leakage, pressure and network management of our supply system.

We also want to hear from Water Supply Licensees, operating in the United Utilities region, who may be able to contribute to reducing demand for water:

1. If they can consider the implementation of new or further water efficiency initiatives to offer water savings to their customers;
2. If there are opportunities to reduce demand on the amount of water used from the potable supply system, by assessing customer acceptability of an alternative source of non-potable supply for

specific industrial processes. An example of this type of alternative could be from a bespoke water recycling scheme.

Suppliers of water resources could be:

1. Licensed undertakers located within or geographically outside the United Utilities supply area;
2. Organisations or individuals located within or geographically outside the United Utilities supply area that have abstraction licences that, by working together, we could use as new or replacement water sources for United Utilities, e.g. industrial, agricultural users. These suppliers may be currently using their abstraction licence, only partly use their licence or no longer have a need for their licence. There could be an opportunity to trade water either wholly or in part from such licences;
3. Similar to point 2, organisations or individuals located within, or geographically outside the United Utilities supply area that wish to be considered as potential new abstractors, and who could apply to the Environment Agency for new abstraction licences that could be used by United Utilities;
4. Companies that could offer water recycling or re-use services/technologies that could be adopted by United Utilities.

It is important to note that potential suppliers of water resources could provide us with just the raw/untreated water (for it to be treated at either an existing or new water treatment works), or it could be the provision of a treated water supply which meets the current regulations for drinking water quality standards. We are also keen to explore opportunities for development of shared use schemes where costs can be split between United Utilities and a new market entrant. We also want to hear from organisations that can offer innovation to improve the operation of our supply system e.g. catchment focussed solutions to improve water availability.

All these options will be considered in the development of our next WRMP, which will cover the period from 2030 to 2090. While the default route for options to be appraised and selected is via the Water Resources Management Plan, a small number of options may, where justified, be progressed outside of this process, with implementation potentially occurring prior to 2030.

3 Statements of requirements

Appendix A to this document details the specific option types that the Environment Agency's Water Resources Planning Guideline[1] (WRPG) asks each water company to consider in the development of their WRMP. This list is not exhaustive, and we would welcome other ideas that could be considered to supplement this list when you complete the submission form (see section 4).

Proposed ideas must deliver a water saving or water supply equal to or greater than 0.5Ml/d. We have set this minimum figure to consider options that are material in the context of water resources in the United Utilities region.

We will exercise discretion for options proposed that are close to these figures or where it is uncertain of the exact size of the option proposed.

The geographical area covered by the United Utilities WRMP is shown in Figure 1.

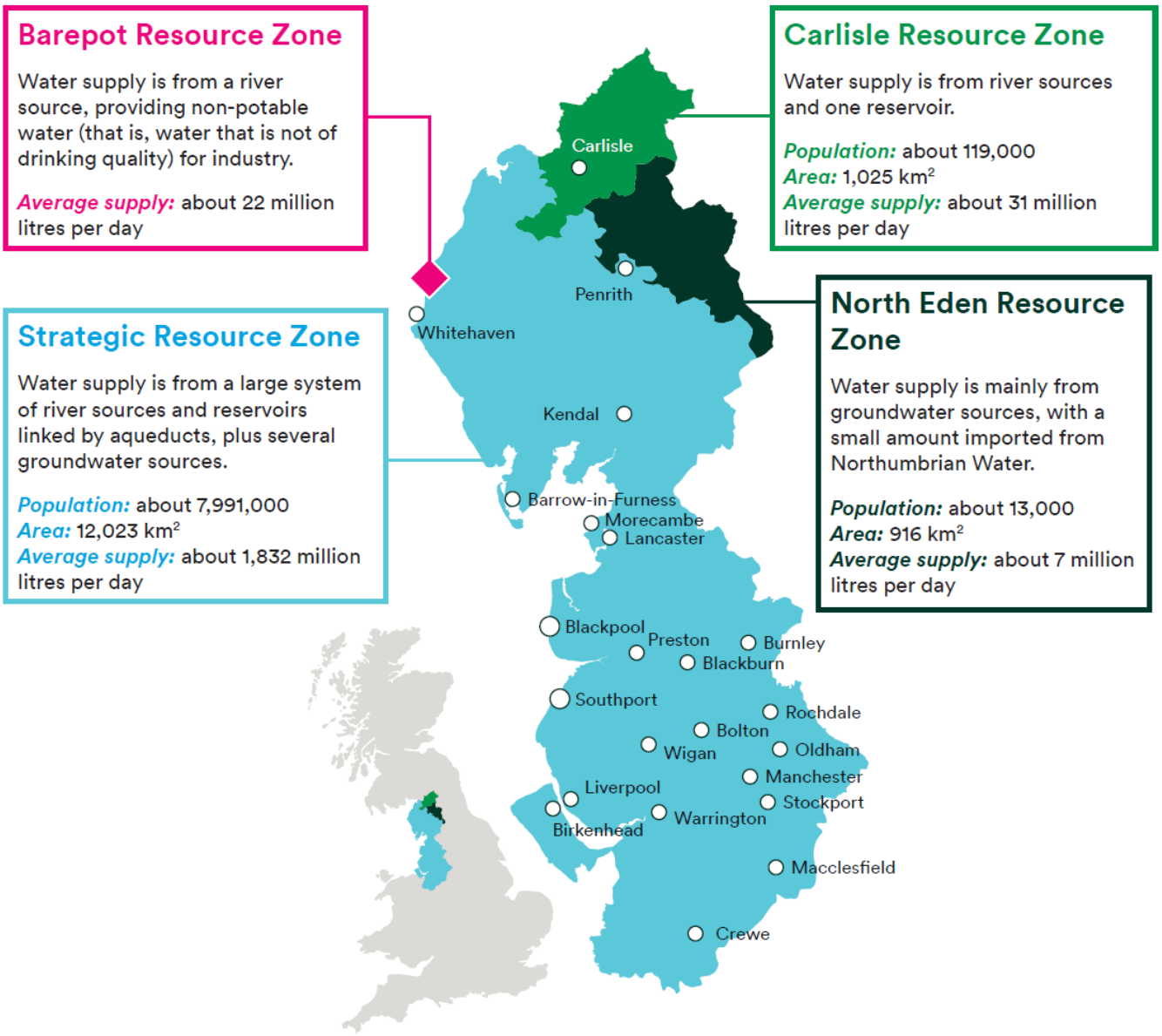

Figure 1 United Utilities water supply area and resource zones.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-resources-planning-guideline/water-resources-planning-guideline

4 Guidance on submitting a response to the pre-market engagement notice

Organisations/individuals wishing to submit a response should use the response template provided here: UU Call for Options - Open Until March 2026 – Fill in form

If an organisation/individual is unable to submit by email, then a hard copy of the response template should be posted to the following United Utilities address:

Water Resources Manager,
Strategic Planning and Sustainability,
Haweswater House,
Lingley Mere Business Park,
Lingley Green Avenue,
Great Sankey,
Warrington,
WA5 3LP

No other documentation should be submitted at this stage.

Please complete the response form above as fully as possible but note where the required information cannot be provided, we will be happy to work with respondents to fill in any gaps after submission.

5 Indicative guidance on the timescale and process for considering options

Figure 2 below shows the outline process that United Utilities intend to follow to identify options, including exploring opportunities for sharing water resources and to reduce demand for water within the next WRMP.

WRMP29 Call for Options

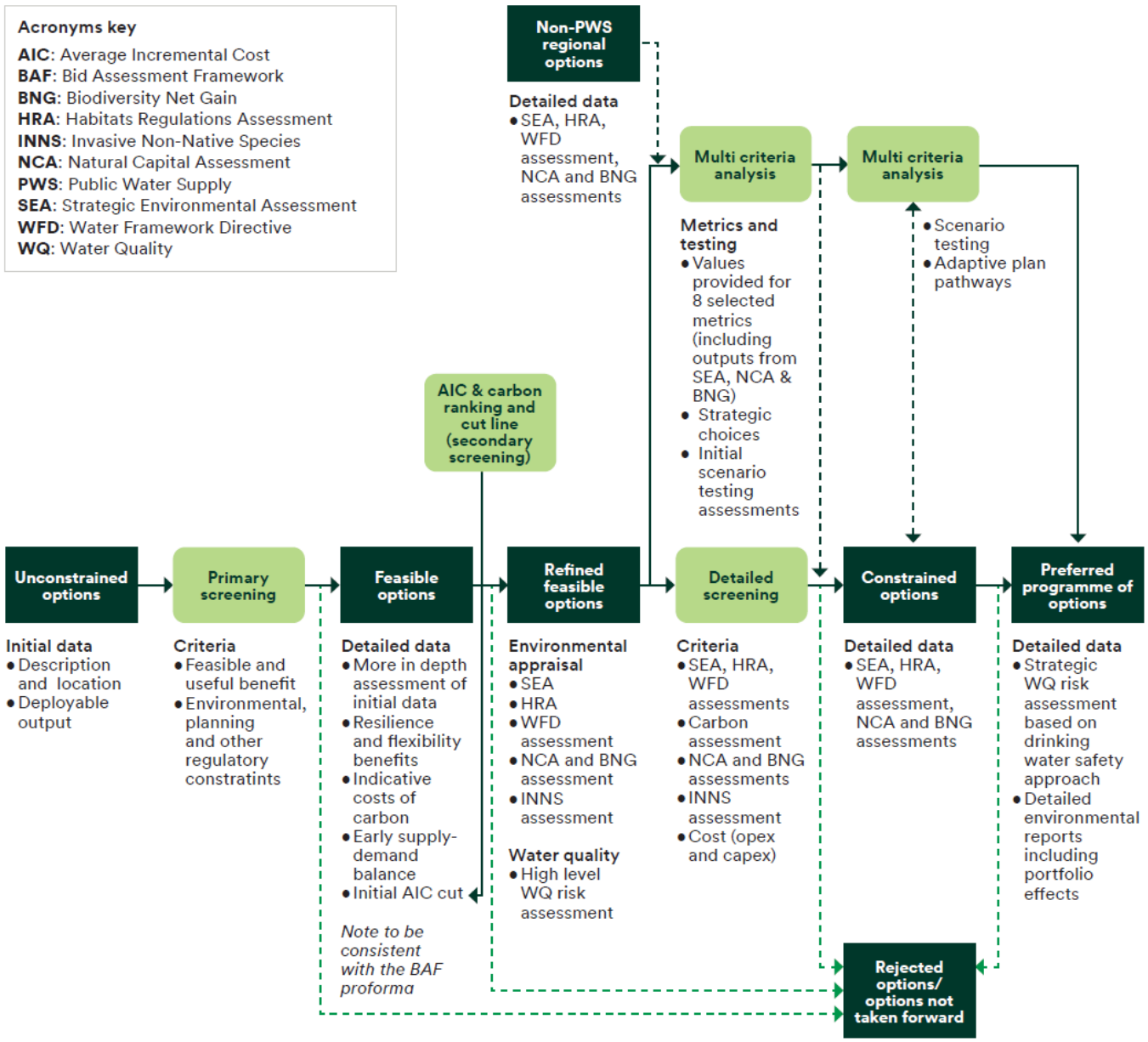

Figure 2 United Utilities options identification process

Interested parties should please note the key indicative timescales as follows:

- All options will be subject to consistent screening and selection criteria at several stages, in the same way as options developed by United Utilities are
- This screening and selection align to the Environment Agency's requirements as part of the WRPG[2] national guidance followed by all companies that are required to prepare a WRMP
- The deadline to submit the response form is 12:00 on 31/03/2026
- Following the deadline, United Utilities will organise a market engagement event. All respondents will receive an invitation to this event, where more detailed information on the timescale and process for considering options will be presented. Whilst attendance is likely to be beneficial, it is not obligatory for ongoing consideration.
- Following the market engagement event, United Utilities will, wherever possible, work with respondents to fill in gaps in responses, as required, to allow screening of the options. The primary screening criteria have been developed by United Utilities from criteria defined within the WRPG

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-resources-planning-guideline/water-resources-planning-guideline

and are listed in Section 6 below. The purpose of this screening is to ensure that only potentially feasible options progress to be developed further.

- United Utilities will undertake this primary screening, and we will discuss with respondents the process that is being applied. We will inform all respondents as to whether the option(s) they have submitted have been successful in making it through to the feasible options list for further development. We will be open and transparent about this procedure.
- For those options passed forward to the "feasible" options list, United Utilities will request more detailed data on each option to allow a scope of the option to be developed. A secondary screening exercise may be completed, at the discretion of United Utilities, building on those criteria as defined in the primary screening to further screen options for their feasibility as more data and information becomes available. The subsequent constrained list of options will be appraised in line with the WRPG.
- The period for submission of more detailed data will be Spring 2026.
- The options appraisal stage will assess the whole-life benefits and whole-life costs, as well as the environmental impacts of each feasible option, thereby providing further screening against environmental requirements, and ranking options on cost-benefit. The costs of an option are:
    - Capital charges, including initial costs as well as ongoing maintenance/replacement
    - Fixed annual costs (e.g. reservation charges) in £/year and volumetric charges in £/megalitre involved in the operation of the option
    - Environmental and social costs (fixed/variable)
    - Carbon costs (fixed/variable, converted from tonnes of CO2e)
- Options appraisal is expected to conclude by Autumn 2026.
- United Utilities will select the more cost beneficial options as "preferred" options for inclusion within the Draft WRMP and will notify all "feasible" options respondents accordingly.
- United Utilities will then continue to engage with "preferred" option respondents to confirm the inclusion of their option(s) within the Draft WRMP, including seeking to establish an "agreement in principle" for the option by Spring 2027
- The Draft WRMP is then published in Winter 2028, for public consultation and subsequent modification, as required, prior to finalisation in 2029.

6 Primary screening criteria

United Utilities will develop a list of "unconstrained" options. Any options submitted will form part of this list. These options are then filtered (termed "screening") to remove implausible options that may not actually work and deliver a benefit; respondents will be involved in discussions during this period. The resultant feasible options will be further assessed to appraise the costs of construction and operation of the option alongside an appraisal of the environmental and social impacts of the option. The primary screening criteria will fall into categories:

- **Whether the option can provide either a supply benefit or reduce demand for water**
    - We will not discount any options based on uncertainty or the quantification of benefit at this stage and will work with providers of information to fully understand the option if the benefits are not clear at this stage.
- **Whether the option has a high risk of failure or inherent uncertainty**
    - We will consider for example the engineering complexity of the option and whether it is likely to deliver the stated benefits.
- **Whether the option could breach unalterable planning or environmental constraints**

  - We will consider for example if the option (with mitigation measures) is likely to result in significant adverse effects to designated sites or sites with significant heritage or visual amenity value.
- **Whether the option could face political and customer disapproval**
  - We will consider for example if the option could cause significant negative socio-economic impact that cannot be mitigated.

The high-level screening criteria used to assess unconstrained options is provided in Appendix B.

7 Secondary screening criteria

In the event of the secondary screening process being undertaken, the secondary screening criteria in Appendix C will be applied to the feasible options to develop a constrained list of options. The secondary screening criteria are broadly similar to the primary screening criteria and will also include further analysis of the risks of implementation of an option, how resilient the option is to meet the requirements of the United Utilities supply system and the suitability of the respondent to become a supplier to United Utilities.

WRMP29 Call for Options

Appendix A: Generic option types for consideration within the WRMP options identification

Indicative resource management options

Scheme Type	Scheme Sub-Categories/Sub-Components
Resource Schemes	
Direct river abstraction	• New river abstraction (with intake) and with licence application • Transfer of existing river licence to new or existing works • Modify existing abstraction licences
New reservoir storage	• On-stream reservoirs • Pumped-storage reservoirs • Flood storage • River regulation reservoirs and/or direct supply reservoir • Development of disused gravel pits (or redundant quarries) as reservoirs • Dam raising
Groundwater sources	• New sources • Improve existing sources • Increase aquifer yield by reducing seawater intrusion into aquifers, by pumping or through introduction of a physical barrier
Reservoir raising	
Groundwork wells (boreholes)	
Infiltration galleries	
Artificial Storage and Recovery wells (or 'Aquifer Storage and Recharge') (ASR)	
Aquifer Recharge (AR)	
Desalination	• Membrane separation (electrodialysis reversal, reverse osmosis) • Thermal processes (multistage flash distillation, multiple effect distillation, mechanical vapour compression)
Reclaimed water	• Reclaimed domestic wastewater • Reclaimed industrial and commercial wastewater (for domestic, commercial and industrial users)
Bulk transfers (including changes to existing transfers, and transfers from sources both inside and outside the company's own supply area)	• Renovation or increase of existing transfer • By canal • By river • By pipeline
Tankering of water	
Sophisticated conjunctive management	

Redevelopment of existing resources with increased yields	• Changes to current system operation that may result in relatively cheap and simple operational changes that could yield benefits to the supply-demand balance
Re-use of existing private supplies (Defence establishments/Industrial sites) taken out of service	
Reclaimed water, water re-use, effluent re-use	• Reclaimed domestic wastewater • Reclaimed industrial and commercial wastewater (for domestic, commercial and industrial users) • Encouraging or requiring indirect waste water re-use (i.e. abstraction downstream from the discharge of treated waste water e.g. for agricultural irrigation and industrial cooling) • Encouraging or requiring direct waste water re-use (i.e. reuse of treated waste water via pipes or other transfer infrastructure)
Imports (icebergs)	• Towing of icebergs from the Norwegian sea
Rain cloud seeding	
Tidal barrage	
Rainwater harvesting	• Direct collection and storage of rainwater
Abstraction license trading	
Water quality schemes that may have the coincidental effect of increasing the deployable output (DO) of a source works	
Catchment management schemes that promote increase yield of sources	
Conjunctive use operation of sources	
Joint (“shared asset”) resource	
Asset transfers	
Options to trade other (infrastructure) assets	

Indicative customer-side management options

Scheme Type	**Scheme Sub-Categories/Sub-Components**
Customer Side Schemes	
Compulsory metering	• Industrial premises • Commercial and public sector premises • Swimming pool owners • Sprinkler/hose pipe users • Households with an outside tap • Households in water-shortage areas

	• Households where a meter or meter box already exists
Enhanced metering / Smart metering	• Targeted installation of water meters and a promotional campaign to increase optant rates and change of occupancy switchers
Meter installation policy	• Installation meters/meter boxes when premises change ownership – Industrial – Commercial and public sector – Households
Metering of sewerage flow	• Optional scheme • Compulsory scheme
Introduction of special fees	• Introduction of Separate additional fees for: – Sprinkler users – Hose pipe users – Outside tap users – Swimming pools
Changes to existing measured tariffs	• Discontinued declining block rate tariffs • Discontinued “neutral” charges • Increasing the volumetric charge • Introducing rising block volumetric charges • Introducing Summer/Winter or other seasonal tariffs • Introducing daily/peak/off-peak tariffs for at least some seasons • Charge only above a defined “subsistence” level of use (to protect low income families)
Introduction of special tariffs for specific users	• Introducing “interruptible” industrial supplies • Introducing lower charges for major users with significant storage • Introducing higher-cost “ban-free” sprinkler or hose pipe licences • Introducing spot pricing for selected customers
Water use audit and inspection (and identification of household and non-household water efficiency opportunities)	• Domestic/commercial property water use audit and retrofit • Domestic/commercial property water use self-audit packs • Commercial property water use audit integrated with Water Regulations Inspection • Integrated Demand Management
Targeted water conservation information (advice on appliance water usage)	• Industrial customers/bodies • Commercial customers

	• Households • Public sector (e.g. schools, hospitals, community groups) • Recreation facilities (parks and gardens, golf courses) • Designers of hot water systems, taps and water using appliances • Purchasers of water-using appliances (i.e. in showrooms) • Labelling water consumption of appliances
Advice & information on direct abstraction and irrigation techniques	• Drip vs. spray irrigation • Direct abstraction • Other techniques for reducing evaporation
Advice & information on leakage detection and fixing techniques	• Industrial • Commercial & public sector • Household • Agricultural
Water saving devices	• Appliance exchange programmes – Washing machine – Dishwasher – WCs – Other • Company subsidy to appliance manufacturers • Company subsidy to consumers for the purchase of water saving appliances • Encouraging or requiring greater use of water saving technology in new and/or existing buildings (industrial, commercial, public sector and household) – Fitting of showers – Low volume shower heads – Limiting purchase/use of “power showers” – Low flush toilets – Dual flush toilets – Fitting new toilets – Composting toilets – Waterless urinals – Retrofitting existing toilets – Shallow trap toilets – Flush controller for urinals – Timing devices – “people detectors”

	– Self-closing taps (i.e. push operation taps that cut off the supply after a short time) – Spray taps – Toilet bags cistern dams (by displacing part of the cistern volume, reduce the flush volume) – Hose activated by a spring loaded trigger mechanism – Limited purchase/use of instantaneous water heaters/boilers – Research and development into water saving technology
Recycling and re-use	• Encouraging or requiring indirect waste water re-use (i.e. abstraction downstream from the discharge or treated waste water e.g. for agricultural irrigation and industrial cooling) • Encouraging or requiring direct waste water re-use (i.e. re-use of treated waste water via pipes or other conveyance) • Encouraging or requiring water recycling (i.e. direct use of untreated "grey water") – Industrial – Commercial and public sector – Household (e.g. using water from baths/showers/basins for toilet use) – Fitting recycling systems in new houses – Fitting recycling systems to existing houses
Other / water efficiency enabling activities	• Sponsoring "waste-minimisation" projects (e.g. Aire & Calder) • Tradable delivery entitlements • Use of non-potable water (e.g. sea water, rainfall) • Programme of re-washing customers' taps • Lobbying for tighter or company-specific water regulations • Improving the enforcement of water regulations • Water butts • Targeting gardeners for rainwater harvesting

	• Implement water efficiency research outcomes (Waterwise) • Planning restrictions preventing new development

Indicative distribution-side management options

Scheme Type	Scheme Sub-Categories/Sub-Components
Distribution Management Options	

Customer supply pipe leakage reduction	• Identification of Major Supply Pipe Leaks
	• Fixing Major Supply Pipe Leaks
	  – At water company expense
	  – At customers' expense

Leakage reduction	• Fixing of reported leaks
	• Find and fix
	  – Trunk mains
	  – Distribution mains
	  – Communication pipes
	  – Reservoir overflows

Active leakage control (ALC)	• Increase in leakage detection and repair resources beyond the short-term sustainable economic level of leakage (SELL)
Leak detection	• Telemetry • District metering
Pressure reduction programmes (installation of pressure reducing valves)	
Advanced replacement of infrastructure for leakage reasons	
Distribution capacity expansion	• Trunk mains • Distribution mains • Other

Indicative production-side management options

Scheme Type	Scheme Sub-Categories/Sub-Components
Production Management Options	
Diagnostic studies	
Improved leakage detection and reduction on raw water mains	
Increase water treatment works (WTW) efficiency	• Reduce treatment works losses
Washwater reuse - recycling of WTW process wastewater discharges	• On site washwater recovery

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Appendix B: Primary screening criteria

Option benefit		Engineering risk and delivery feasibility		Environmental, planning and other regulatory constraints		Political and customer acceptability	
Is the likely scale of supply benefit (yield) to water companies and/or other sectors relative to the supply deficiency sufficient to proceed?	y/n	Is the engineering complexity such that it is highly unlikely to deliver the benefit stated i.e. is it technically feasible?	y/n	Does the option cause unmitigable damage to a European designated site (SAC/SPA/Ramsar)?	y/n	Is the option politically unacceptable such that it is unlikely to gain planning approval?	y/n
Is the option in a location that makes deployment practicable?	y/n	Is the technology established with more than one example of in use at scale worldwide?	y/n	Does the option cause unmitigable damage to Nationally designated site (SSSI/NNR/National Park/Ancient Woodland)?	y/n	Does it cause significant negative socio-economic impact than cannot be mitigated?	y/n
Is the option likely to be granted an abstraction licence or other necessary consent?	y/n			Does the option cause unmitigable damage to Site with significant heritage or visual amenity value (e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monument or AONB)?	y/n		
Could the option offer supply / demand benefits at a regional or national scale?	y/n						

Note that if “No” the option is not automatically screened out. Instead, a balance of probability decision is taken based on best available information and expert judgement.

Appendix C: Secondary screening criteria

Option benefit		Engineering risk and delivery feasibility		Environmental, planning and other regulatory constraints		Political and customer acceptability		Cost, carbon and natural capital	
Is the scheme mutually exclusive with a lower cost, higher benefit, less environmentally damaging option?	y/n	Can the option be developed within the required timescale to meet the WRZ deficit	y/n	Does the option pass HRA compliance risks?	y/n	Is the option likely to be completely unacceptable to customers? for example in terms of taste and odour	y/n	Capex cost	For use in decision making only
Is the option dependent on another option that has been screened out?	y/n			Does the option increase the risk of flooding that cannot be mitigated and / or is the site at risk of flooding?	y/n	Is the option likely to be unacceptable to stakeholders?	y/n	Opex cost	
Is the option durable / viable in the long term?	y/n			Does it breach any other legislative requirements that would render it illegal?	y/n			Carbon impact (embedded and operational)	
Is the option flexible to changing circumstances in demand?	y/n			Does the option transfer raw water between catchments and represent a non mitigable INNS risk?	y/n			Natural capital value	
				Does the option transfer water of a different quality that would breach DWI guidance (e.g. metaldehyde)?	y/n			What if any is the net gain to the environment provided by the option?	
				Does the option lead to deterioration of any of the	y/n			Does the option provide other resilience benefits to water companies?	

		waterbodies classified under the WFD?				
		Does the option meet the social and environmental objectives of the relevant SEA?	y/n		Does the option provide benefit for other sectors and is supported by them	
		If in Wales does the option comply with Welsh Government's SMNR principles	y/n			