

DEE VALLEY WATER PLC

DROUGHT PLAN

Executive Summary

A fundamental duty of a water company is to ensure that it has sufficient resources of water to supply its customers. The balance between available resources and the demand for water by customers is assessed over a forecast period of 25 years and set out in the water company's Water Resources Plan. Whilst this forecast takes into consideration the likelihood of droughts occurring, there is always the possibility that a drought could occur that is more extreme than the worst that has been considered in the Water Resources Plan. This Drought Plan sets out how the Company will manage supplies of water to its customers in the event of such an extreme drought event.

The Water Act 2003 made it a statutory obligation on water companies to produce a Drought Plan under new section 39B of the Water Industry Act 1991.

Dee Valley Water is heavily dependent on the River Dee for its water (85% overall), the remainder being supplied from its upland reservoirs and groundwater sources. The river is regulated by reservoirs in the Welsh hills, the operation of which is controlled through General Directions by the Environment Agency Wales. For severe droughts, the General Directions define the principles and detail by which the river flows and abstractions have to be reduced by the water companies who use the River Dee water. Because of its heavy dependence on the River Dee, the Company's actions during a severe drought will be heavily influenced by the restrictions imposed through the General Directions for the river. The reservoirs on the River Dee and the Company's own reservoirs are operated according to control curves which define storage levels at which various drought contingency measures are triggered. The drought contingency actions set out in the Drought Plan include both supply-side and demand-side options.

The sequence of demand management actions would be:

- extra promotion of water efficiency and appeals for restraint
- enhanced leakage control and pressure reduction
- hosepipe and sprinkler ban
- non-essential use restrictions.

Possible alternative supply-side options include:

- recommissioning abandoned boreholes and sources
- application for drought permits
- increasing drought yields (existing sources).

By definition droughts are extreme events and they will have an effect on the environment. Priorities, including the supply of water for public health and the protection of the environment, must be established and possible monitoring and mitigation measures are discussed in the Plan.

As a drought develops, and for its duration, good communication with customers and other stakeholders will be vital. A Communications Plan is included in the Drought Plan to ensure correct messages are communicated at the appropriate time including:

- water efficiency including leakage control by Dee Valley Water
- the need for any water use bans and the benefits to customers and the environment of compliance
- the severity of the event if Drought Orders are required.