



Draft Drought Plan

Appendix 6: Regional Alignment



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A6.1. Introduction

Drought is rarely localised to a single supply area and typically occurs at regional and national level because the UK weather patterns that influence drought have impacts across these scales. It is therefore important that we plan our response to drought coherently across our region to align our planning assumptions and messaging across the region.

Pennon Group companies Bournemouth Water, Bristol Water and South West Water form 75% of the regional water planning group West Country Water Resources and Environment (WCWE) alongside Wessex Water. The WCWE group provide our long term planning of regional water resources, ensuring we maintain supplies to customers whilst protecting and enhancing the environment, ensuring that any future new resources that are develop provide the best value to our region.



Figure 6.1 Map showing WCWE operating area, and neighbouring water companies.

Pennon Group and Wessex Water have a good recent history of working together during dry weather and drought both in 2022 in Devon and Somerset and 2025 in our Bristol and Bath areas.

This section outlines the key areas where our supply systems, and therefore our drought plan, interact with each other.

A6.2. Regional supplies

A6.2.1. Wimbleball reservoir

Wimbleball Reservoir on Exmoor is a shared reservoir between South West Water and Wessex Water. South West Water typically use the resource from late spring to early autumn by releasing water from the dam into the River Exe for abstraction downstream. The releases are controlled by the level of river flows on the River Exe at Thorverton and when

river flows are sufficiently high abstraction is made from the river without reservoir releases. Wessex Water use the resource year-round and abstract their resource directly from the reservoir. Wimbleball reservoir storage can also be supplemented by a winter pumped storage scheme from the River Exe.

During the development of this drought plan we have worked closely with Wessex Water to align our operational assumptions and modelling activity of Wimbleball Reservoir to ensure we are consistent between our respective plans. The Wimbleball WRZ water resources model requires simulated river inflows for the River Exe and Wimbleball Reservoir. We have worked with Wessex Water to develop rainfall-runoff models for these river catchments. Historical and stochastic drought inflows were generated using these models, allowing both companies to simulate the same drought events in their water resources models.

Analysis of the modelled historical simulations has enabled Pennon Group and Wessex Water to improve their understanding of when each company triggers drought actions and begin work towards an operational agreement for the utilisation of Wimbleball Reservoir during a drought. This work exploring an operational agreement will be developed beyond this drought plan but the principles of abstraction and drought management for the reservoir will be applied in this drought plan. We currently have actions outlined in Appendix 3 where we work with Wessex Water to manage this resource during a drought.

A6.2.2. Bristol to Bath

Bristol Water provides an export to Wessex Water's Bath supply area. The flexible nature of Bristol Water's systems means that this water can be provided from a range of sources depending on the time of year and prevailing conditions at the time.

The export to Wessex Water provides an annual average benefit of 4.4 MI/d and this assumes a peak month of 11.37 MI/d and 3.75 MI/d in all other months. The timing of the peak month may vary from an operational position in any given year, depending on the weather conditions and other operational factors. We assume this peak would typically occur July or August but Bristol resource position during drought is not materially impacted by this assumption because our reservoir storage position is our key drought trigger and our lowest levels are typically later in the year in October. We currently have actions outlined in Appendix 3 where we work with Wessex Water to manage this resource during a drought.

A6.2.3. Bournemouth Water and Wessex Water

A resilience main exists between the Bournemouth Water and Wessex Water supply areas. This is a bi-directional connection up to 10 MI/d which allows water to move between company areas but with an overall net benefit of zero because over the course of a year the bi-directional flows in each direction are roughly equivalent. Over recent years this resilience main has not been actively used and preparatory work would be needed to enable its use but this is not currently planned.

A6.2.4. Other small transfers

There are a number of small localised transfers of water between Wessex Water and Bristol Water and Wessex Water and South West Water. These small transfers are typically at the furthest extent of our respective networks and have no material impact on our overall water resource position.

A6.2.5. New Appointments and Variation (NAVs)

We have agreed bulk supply agreements with NAVs across our region. During a drought a drought we would be in close communication with them the align our messaging to customers where possible as outline in Section 5. This would be particularly important during the implementation of Temporary Use Bans (TUBs).

A6.2.6. Water retailers

We work closely with water retailers supply non-household customers across our region. During a drought a drought we would be in close communication with them the align our messaging and support our demand activity around water efficiency and non-household audits. This would be particularly important during the implementation of a Non-Essential Use Ban (NEUB).

A6.3. Planning regionally for drought

During the development of this drought plan Pennon Group and Wessex Water have been meeting frequently to align our joint understanding and assumptions that underpin our respective drought plans. This has shaped our respective plans, the implications of which are discussed further in Appendix 1 Testing our Drought Plan. We continue to work with Wessex Water and are exploring options to formalise our operations at joint sources and transfer.

Bristol Water are a member of the River Severn Working Group. We have a significant interest in the River Severn source via our abstraction from the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. We work closely with the River Severn Working Group for both long term planning around the River Severn regulation system and for within year management of risks and decisions. Bristol Water is also an associate member of the Water Resources West (WRW) regional planning group to ensure consistency in our planning assumptions within the wider River Severn catchment.

A6.4. Working regionally during drought

During a drought we would have closely communication and collaboration with Wessex Water to ensure alignment in how we are operating against our respective drought plans. As a drought progresses the frequency of communication may increase both operationally to manage day to day water resources and strategically in coordination of our drought plan actions.