

# **Final Statutory Drought Plan**

## **Executive Summary**

This document is published in accordance with the requirements of the Water Industry Act 1991 and the Drought Plan Regulations 2005. It sets out the Company's strategy for managing future drought events, based on the experience of previous droughts.

All the water supplied by the Company comes from underground sources. There is a healthy surplus of deployable output against normal demand, and this is forecast to continue for the foreseeable future, taking into account the significant levels of new housing development planned in the area over the next 15 years. 59% of billed households are metered, which helps to curb peak demands. The Company has been set a challenging leakage target, which it is committed to meeting, by a combination of district meter monitoring and active leakage control. A number of initiatives to promote water efficiency among customers are also offered.

The critical drought scenario for Cambridge Water is a succession of dry winters, when there is insufficient effective rainfall to recharge the underground aquifer. Actions taken as a consequence of two drought events in the 1990s, and the recent 2004/06 drought demonstrate the Company's ability to manage droughts effectively.

This plan sets out a series of management actions that will be implemented in the event of a future drought of similar magnitude to the one which occurred in the early 1920s, and which was the most serious drought event in almost 100 years of Company records. The plan consists of a number of options to limit demand and increase supplies, the introduction of which will be triggered by an escalation of events, such as increasing rainfall deficit and falling borehole levels. These options are set out in detail in the options forms appended to the main body of the plan.

Cambridge Water is mindful of the possible environmental effects of its abstraction programme, particularly during a drought. The Company has been working with the Environment Agency in a programme of monitoring of sensitive wetland sites: this process will continue during a drought, especially where sources are recommissioned or upgraded as supply side options.

Effective and timely communication with customers are essential elements of the plan, which sets out the process by which messages will be conveyed to the public during a drought. Regular and increased contact between the Company and the Environment Agency will ensure that messages are consistent and appropriate.

Drought actions will be co-ordinated by a Drought Management Team, consisting of senior officers of the Company, who will consult with the Board of Directors before implementing appropriate measures.

The drought plan will be reviewed and updated regularly. If there are any material changes which trigger a revision, a statutory consultation process will be followed, prior to the submission of a revised draft plan to the Secretary of State. Changes to the plan may also be prompted by a post-drought review.

The drought plan can be viewed in full on the Company website [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk), or hard copies of the plan are available at the Company's head office:  
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