



South Staffs Water

Customer Challenge Group

Briefing Note 4:

Levels of Service for Customer Restrictions



1. Legislation

During a drought water companies can temporarily restrict certain types of customer water use as part of their demand-side drought management actions. Section 36 of the Flood and Water Management Act allows water companies a wide range of temporary water use restrictions that they can implement without requiring a drought order.

2. Levels of Service

Levels of service is a contract between a water company and its customers, setting out the standard of service that customers can expect to receive from a water company. In water resources planning, levels of service describe the average frequency that a company will apply restrictions on water use to its customers. The frequencies will vary with different types of restrictions, as more severe restrictions are required less often. For example, customer temporary use bans (TUBs) may have an average frequency of 1 in 20 years and a drought order restricting non-essential uses of 1 in 40 years.

The level of service a company identifies, as part of its water resources management plan, should be the minimum that it plans to deliver every year.

The impacts of customer levels of service are taken into consideration when calculating deployable output. For more about deployable output, see CCG briefing note 'Water Resource Planning', page 3.

Changing the level of service/frequency of restrictions can change the amount of water available.

3. Levels of Service for South Staffs Water

Despite the drought conditions experienced in 1995 and 2011, we have not imposed a hosepipe ban since the drought of 1976.

Our key indicator of levels of service for average frequency of restrictions is Blithfield Reservoir. Clywedog Reservoir, which is used to release water into the River Severn when levels are low, is used as a secondary indicator.

We use a water resources model to examine resource availability by simulating drought years. The model uses an 84 year record of data for Blithfield Reservoir and the River Severn and this includes three critical years when water resources were under stress. These years are 1933/34, 1995/96 and 1975/76.

The 1933/34 and 1975/76 droughts were two season droughts which were characterised by exceptionally dry winters. In addition, 1976 was one of the driest single years on record, while the 1995/96 drought was a severe two season drought, consisting of two dry summers and an intervening dry winter.

This modelling suggests that in two of the three critical years a temporary use ban could be required if this period of climate was repeated. Our level of service for frequency of restrictions is therefore equivalent to once in every 40 years.



Glossary

ALC – Active Leakage Control.

AMP6 – Asset management plan for the 6th period since privatisation: 2015-20.

CRoW – Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

Defra – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Deployable output – The amount of water available to us to supply to customers.

DMA – District Metered Areas.

dWRMP – Draft Water Resources Management Plan.

EA – Environment Agency.

ELL – Economic Level of Leakage.

FBP – Final Business Plan.

fWRMP – Final Water Resources Management Plan.

Headroom – An amount of water added to allow for uncertainty in various elements of supply/demand forecasts.

HWBD – Habitats and Wild Birds Directive.

Measured charges – Water bills charged by way of water registered through a meter.

MI/d – Million litres per day.

NEP – National Environment Programme.

Ofwat – Water Services Regulation Authority.

PCC – Per Capita Consumption.

PR14 – Price review undertaken in 2014 for 2015-20 period.

RBMP – River Basin Management Plan.

SAC – Special Areas of Conservation.

SELL – Sustainable Economic Level of Leakage.

SPA – Special Protection Area.

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest.

TUB – Temporary Use Ban.

Unmeasured charges – Water bills charged by way of rateable value.

Volumetric charge – Same as measured charge.

WAFU – Water Available For Use.

WFD – Water Framework Directive.

WIA – Water Industry Act (1991).

WRA – Water Resources Act (1991).

WRMP – Water Resources Management Plan.



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