

## ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 7 February 2023
<b>Report Subject</b>	Dwr Cymru Welsh Water draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024 - Public Consultation Launch
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) have published a draft Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) for public consultation and have asked the Council as a key stakeholder to submit any views on the draft plan. WRMPs are statutory documents that all water companies must produce at least once every five years, and which play a crucial role in securing the public water supply for the region. Water resources planning is about trying to ensure there is enough water supplied to homes and businesses while protecting the natural environment. The previous plan was dated 2019 and is now being reviewed.

As part of this process, DCWW need to understand how much water they are able to take from rivers, reservoirs and boreholes and supply to customers, not only in 'normal years' when good supplies of rainfall are expected across the supply areas, but also in periods of drought. Within the WRMP, DCWW forecast water resource availability into the future (up to 25 years from the base date of the plan), which takes account of environmental factors and climate change that reduce the amount of water that can be sustainably taken from the various water sources. Given the recent issues with drought experienced in Wales in 2022, and also building in assumptions about climate change in terms of warmer summers and dryer winters, the key theme for this plan is drought resilience.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members note the content of this report and the main outcome of the draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024, that shows no supply resilience issues for the Alwen Dee zone that Flintshire is part of.
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2	That Members support the content of paragraph 1.10 of this report and give the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) delegated authority to prepare a final response and agree this with the Chair of this committee, prior to responding to the consultation by the due date.
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## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>Explaining the draft Water Resource Management Plan 2024</b>
1.01	DCWW need to balance how much they are able to supply against the current and future demand for water using the best data available. This is a key component of the draft WRMP in terms of the forecasts of demand that have been made across 23 Water Resource Planning Zones that DCWW use to subdivide their operating area within Wales. Flintshire is within the Alwen Dee zone which also covers parts of Wrexham and South Denbighshire.
1.02	Where the supply-demand balance flags a potential shortfall, to resolve it DCWW use the WRMP to identify options that either reduce demand or increase supplies. However, the decision on which solution is best should look at wider objectives such as maintaining good drinking water quality, meeting Government policy direction or customer's wider preferences such as environmental impact. The investment required is then fed through into DCWW's company business plan to seek the necessary funding.
1.03	<p>The approaches DCWW consider as being key to the successful delivery of the Plan are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To comply with relevant legislation, notably the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and align with Welsh Government's "Water Strategy for Wales 2015".</li> <li>• To deliver a Best Value Plan that doesn't just consider least cost solutions, but which looks to provide wider benefit to customers, society and the environment.</li> <li>• To embed the principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) within our Plan.</li> <li>• To ensure that the views of our customers and stakeholders are properly considered, particularly on service levels and the cost of the Plan.</li> <li>• To ensure our decision making considers all available options to reduce demand and/or increase supply to achieve an environmentally sustainable and secure supply of water.</li> <li>• To prioritise demand management over supply side options where the wider benefits of doing so provide a Best Value solution. As part of this, we are proposing a further 10% reduction in leakage rates during the 2025-2030 period.</li> <li>• To improve the resilience of our supply systems to pressures such as drought and climate change. We must deliver a plan that provides</li> </ul>

	<p>resilience to a 1 in 200-year drought event and will set out our plans for improving our resilience to a 1 in 500-year drought event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that the Plan is compliant with all statutory requirements and to carry the required environmental assessments of the Plan.</li> <li>• To ensure there is alignment between the Water Resource West Regional Plan and our company water resource management plan as we develop these plans in parallel.</li> <li>• To investigate the opportunities for trading water resources with 3rd parties where this is to the benefit of our customers and not to the detriment of the environment.</li> </ul>
1.04	<p>Over the last 25 years, the quantity of water supplied to its customers by DCWW has reduced from 1000 million litres per day (MI/d) to 850 MI/d. DCWW estimate that half of this reduction is due to leakage reduction with the rest accounted for by reduced demand from Industry and greater customer awareness of the value of their water supply and subsequent reductions in their usage. Whilst Wales has significant average annual rainfall and therefore there shouldn't be a resource issue in Wales, DCWW use WRMPs to constantly review the future supply position in order to be able to respond to issues that may arise and target investment to find solutions.</p>
1.05	<p>Each WRMP has a 5 year timeframe and overlaps with the previous one. They are also produced on the basis of current drivers and the draft 2024 plan focusses on drought resilience and adapting to the challenges of climate change. This focus has also been influenced by the drought experienced in parts of Wales in 2022 and the ways in which DCWW will deal with such a scenario in future, in terms of restrictions it may have to put in place. These include the potential need to impose supply restrictions through Emergency Drought Orders (water rationing via standpipes/rota cuts) as well as Temporary Use Bans (formerly hosepipe bans). These are extreme measures that DCWW project on the basis of the probability of such an event occurring once in every 200 years (or a 0.5% probability frequency). The aim of the draft 2024 WRMP is to improve drought resilience and surety of supply such that such extreme events and measures would be reduced to a 1 in 500 year probability of occurrence, or 0.2% probability.</p>
1.06	<p>The diagrams below illustrates the DCWW operational area as well as the 23 Water Resource Planning Zones that they use to subdivide their area, and form the basis of their assessment of resilience via their long term demand forecasting. Flintshire lies within the most north easterly zone which is the Alwen Dee zone.</p> <p>DCWW Operational Area and Planning Zones:</p>

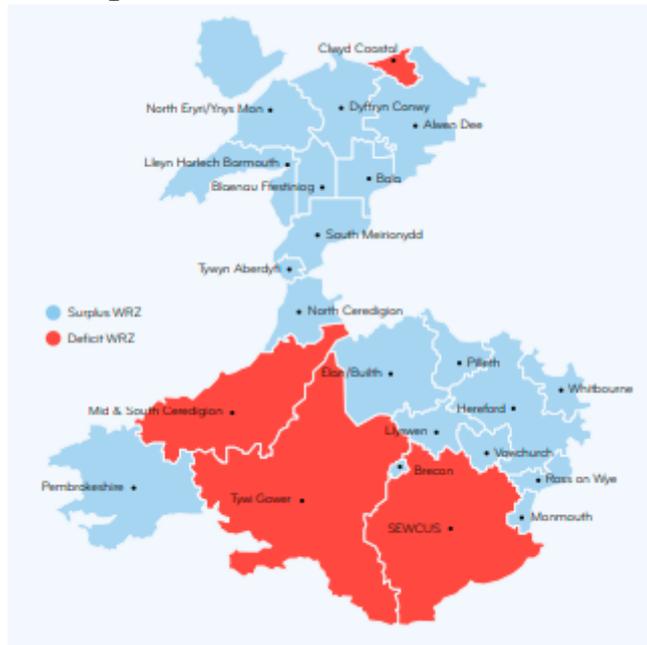


1.07

Each WRMP forecasts demand 25 years ahead based on best available evidence, and calculates the overall supply-demand balance for each of the 23 water resource zones. From this assessment, the draft WRMP 2024 identifies that 4 zones are not resilient (to drought) based on the 1 in 200 year drought resilience probability scenario. The 4 zones are:

- Tywi Gower zone (16MI/d deficit)
- Mid & South Ceredigion zone (1.1 MI/d deficit)
- Clwyd Coastal Zone (0.4 MI/d deficit)
- South-East Wales Conjunctive Use zone (SEWCUS) (45MI/d deficit)

The diagram below shows the location of these zones in deficit:



1.08

Clearly the Clwyd Coast zone is in close proximity to the Alwen Dee zone that Flintshire is part of but there are no supply resilience concerns with this zone, and the Clwyd Coastal zone has a marginal supply/demand deficit, where the draft WRMP identifies specific design work for network reinforcement as part of the long term planning to mitigate this risk. The

	<p>other deficit zones are all in South Wales and also have specific proposals or options that will be considered that also include network strengthening, increased abstraction, increased capacity at treatment works, and raising reservoir levels.</p>
1.09	<p>As part of the WRMP's general drive to improved resilience and demand management across the whole DCWW operating area, there are two key general measures that DCWW will continue to promote through its plan. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leakage reduction</li> <li>• Water efficiency</li> </ul> <p>The first of these is for DCWW to address as part of improving the maintenance of their infrastructure and they have set targets to reduce leakage in their system by 15% between 2020-2025, with a further 10% reduction planned between 2025-2030. The second element of water efficiency relies on customers changing their usage patterns and reducing daily consumption, where the average usage is currently around 130 litres per person per day (l/p/d) and the aim is to reduce this down to 110 l/p/d. DCWW will seek to encourage a greater take-up of water metering to assist with these measures. The two measures are linked and the plan refers to a 'social contract' whereby DCWW will do their part in terms of reducing leakage which in turn will have a positive effect on consumer behaviour.</p>
1.10	<p>From the Council's perspective, the indication for the Alwen Dee zone is that there is expected to be good resilience to drought in the 25 years from the base date of this plan, ensuring a consistency of water supply for both Industry and domestic consumption. In relation to this point, it is recommended that Members agree that officers respond to the consultation by the deadline of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 offering general support for the draft WRMP and the specific outcome for the Alwen Dee Water Management Zone. In addition, Members are asked to endorse the following additional points to be made as part of the response, which will then result in DCWW responding specifically to the Council's representation. These further points focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek clarification that the growth within the now adopted LDP has been factored into the demand forecasting for the Alwen Dee water management zone;</li> <li>• Fully support the wider resilience measures relating to improvement of leakage and greater emphasis on customer awareness of the need to use water more efficiently;</li> <li>• Make the related point that a reduction in waste water going to waste water treatment works has the potential to assist with the significant issue of improving the treatment of phosphates in waste water, and reducing levels discharged into SAC protected rivers;</li> <li>• Encourage DCWW to make the links from the draft WRMP to the need to improve the phosphate removal technology at waste water treatment works as part of their future capital programme;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek a commitment to more regular direct liaison between the Council and DCWW representatives on common issues such as demand planning and phosphates mitigation.</li> </ul>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
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2.01	There are no identifiable resource implications from the need to provide a response to this consultation other than modest officer time.
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<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
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3.01	<p>Given this is a report produced by DCWW for consultation, they have produced a series of assessments alongside the draft plan that comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Environmental Assessment</li> <li>• Habitat Regulations Assessment</li> <li>• Water Framework Directive Assessment</li> <li>• Natural Capital Assessment</li> </ul> <p>These reports accompany the consultation document on DCWW's website (see link in accessible background documents section).</p>
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
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4.01	This is an opportunity for the Council to respond to the DCWW consultation as a key stakeholder. The suggested response is as set out in para 1.10 of this report.
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
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5.01	None
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<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
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6.01	<a href="#">DCWW Water Resource Management Plan consultation web page</a>
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<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
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7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Andy Roberts, Service Manager Strategy  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703211  <b>E-mail:</b> andy.roberts@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
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<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
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	<b>These are provided corporately on the Infonet (link) and maintained by the Executive Office</b>
	<p><b>Water Resource Resilience:</b> This is a measure of the ability of DCWW to meet demand during a specified severity of drought.</p> <p><b>Supply-Demand balance –</b> This is the relationship between the amount of supply from all sources available at any given time, related to the demand for water that exists at that time. Where demand exceeds supply, then there is a supply deficit.</p>