

CHANGES TO HOW WE PLAN FOR WATER

We generally consider the UK to have an abundance of water due to our weather. However, the supply of water for public consumption and industrial usage is under threat from population growth, environmental demands and climate change. There is a significant risk of future droughts and access to water is limited in many catchment areas now. Therefore, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and other relevant bodies are reviewing the plan for how water resources are managed in England.

It is envisaged that a new National Framework will set out the water needs for public consumption and industrial usage across England and across industrial sectors. The framework will articulate both the national and regional water needs, set expectations for demand management, new resources and transfers between regions. The priorities will be:

- building resilience to drought and other pressures on water resources;
- cost effective solutions, including transfers;
- work across sectors, sharing infrastructure where appropriate; and
- embedding environmental improvement.

It is planned that the final Water Resources Management Plan will be published in late 2023.

How does this affect the Food and Drink Sector

Industrial users are the biggest consumers of water outside of public water supply, typically with a small number of big abstractions. The Food and Drink sector accounts for 10% of the industrial water usage at approximately 15 million m³pa. Regional demand varies across England, with the Food and Drink sector being the biggest consumer in the East of England.

Your access to sufficient water for your needs may be limited in the future and you need to start preparing for this scenario now. Do you understand your current water usage and efficiency? Have you identified options for re-cycling water? Are your existing water sources under threat? Could your suppliers be vulnerable to water shortages?

SLR Consulting have the broad range of skills and expertise to be able to assist you in assessing how the Water Resources Management Plan may affect you.



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