

# Water Resources Management Plan – Portsmouth Water

## The Company

Portsmouth Water operate in southern England, providing drinking water to customers in parts of east Hampshire and West Sussex.

## Summary of the Plan

Portsmouth Water's plan predicts that the company will have sufficient water available to supply their customers without the need to develop new supplies. However, the company are planning to invest in the development of Havant Thicket Reservoir, providing additional security of supply for their own customers, and creating the opportunity to provide water to neighbouring Southern Water, who face shortfalls.

**Consultation Deadline: 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

**E-mail your response to:** [water.resources@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:water.resources@defra.gsi.gov.uk) putting 'Portsmouth Water draft Water Resources Management Plan' in the subject line and copying in [wrmp@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:wrmp@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk), [water-company-plan@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:water-company-plan@environment-agency.gov.uk) and [wrmp@portsmouthwater.co.uk](mailto:wrmp@portsmouthwater.co.uk)

## What to include in your response:

- Suggest that the Company and its regulators assess the draft plan against the aspirations of [Blueprint for PR19](#)
- **Welcome the good points** from the company's plan, and **challenge them on some of the less good points** – these are summarised below, focussing on areas where the environmental costs & benefits could be greatest, such as abstraction, leakage and catchment management.
- Ofwat want to see all companies adopting bespoke **environmental performance commitments**; the company should amend its proposals for demand management and commit to a revised target through an environmental Performance Commitment, because this is an area where their current proposals are less ambitious than those of others in the industry. Although Portsmouth Water are not permitted implement compulsory metering of their customers, they could adopt a more ambitious water efficiency programme.

## The good

**Abstraction:** The sector as a whole is expecting to put **less water** into distribution in England in both the short term and long term despite climate change and population growth.

**Leakage:** Portsmouth Water plan to reduce leakage by **18%** in the next 5 years; this is more than Ofwat's minimum recommendation of 15% (although they are starting from a fairly high

level at 110 litres/property/day, so the job may be relatively easy when compared to some other companies who already perform well).

**Resilience:** If companies' supplies aren't resilient, they have to rely on drought permits during dry periods; these are permissions allowing companies to take more water from the environment to ensure that supplies are maintained, but which result in environmental damage. Portsmouth Water predict that they are **resilient to a 1 in 200 year drought**, meaning that they won't need to rely on drought permits.

**Catchment Management:** These schemes work with farmers and land managers to improve the way that sites are managed, reducing the risk of pollution events occurring. Portsmouth Water have an active catchment management programme (**Downs & Harbours Clean Water Partnership**) to mitigate the risk of gradual pollutants including nitrates, pesticides, turbidity, oil spillages, and cryptosporidium. Their customers are supportive of this work.

**Collaboration:** Portsmouth Water are active in '**Water Resources South East**', a collaboration involving several water companies who are looking at regional rather than company-specific solutions to water shortages. They will be providing bulk supplies to Southern Water to enable them to abstract less from the R. Itchen at times when it would be damaging.

### The less good

**Abstraction:** Ofwat encourages companies to adopt an incentive mechanism that would see them choosing not to abstract from the most environmentally-sensitive water sources during droughts. **Portsmouth Water haven't mentioned this** mechanism in the plans, (but this could be because they have already reduced any damaging licences).

**Leakage:** A [NIC Report](#) into the resilience of water supply infrastructure published in April 2018 recommends companies halve leakage by 2050; Portsmouth Water propose **only a 28% reduction** by 2045.

**Demand Management:** The NIC Report recommends that companies should be targeting 118 litres per person per day. Portsmouth Water propose a 2.8% reduction from 136 to 132 litres pppd over the coming five years. Over the longer term, they have the **lowest ambition** of all companies; a 4.6% reduction between now and 2045. (Unlike some other companies, Portsmouth Water are not allowed to meter all of their customers, which makes it difficult to incentivise customers to save water. As a result they predict that only two thirds of their customers will be on a water meter by 2045. The regulators should be challenged on this ruling).