



Cambridge Water



South Staffs Water



To help create a world where essential services and infrastructure deliver for customers, clients and our planet

WRMP24 Annual Review South Staffs Region 2025/26

June 2026

Contents

Contents.....	1
1. Executive summary	3
1.1 Purpose.....	3
1.2 Overview	3
2. Introduction	5
2.1 Water resource zones, level of service and performance commitments.....	6
2.2 Overview of 2025/26 supply-demand balance	6
2.3 Company-specific actions.....	8
2.4 Dry year annual average	9
3. Supply.....	10
3.1 Impacts of weather events on supply	10
3.2 Outage	12
3.3 Water Quality	13
3.4 Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP)	14
3.5 Deployable output (DO)	14
3.6 Water available for use	15
3.7 Bulk supply agreements	15
3.8 Imported and exported potable water	15
3.9 New appointments and variations (NAVS)	15
3.10 Climate change impact on supply	16
3.11 Unbilled water	16
3.12 Distribution system operational use (DSOU)	17
3.13 Drought Plan.....	17
4. Demand.....	18

4.1 Impact of weather events on demand.....	18
4.2 Demand Profile.....	19
4.3 Non-Household Consumption.....	23
5. Metering.....	25
5.1 Leakage.....	26
5.2 Consistency in reporting methodology	26
5.3 Water efficiency	26
6. Headroom and options	29
6.1 Target headroom.....	29
6.2 Supply-demand balance	29
7. Forward look	30

1. Executive summary

1.1 Purpose

This document sets out South Staffs Water’s water resources management plan (WRMP) annual review for WRMP24 up to the end of March 2026. While South Staffordshire Water PLC incorporates the Cambridge Water supply area, this document applies only to the South Staffs Water region.

The purpose of the annual review is to identify any material changes to the WRMP and to report on progress made during the previous 12 months. This report comments on outturn data against WRMP24. **We are not reporting any material changes to our latest WRMP published in August 2024.**

1.2 Overview

The winter of 2024/25 preceding the reporting period was dry with only 83.1% of long-term average rainfall, and the spring of 2025 the driest on record (March was only 24.6% of long-term average rainfall). The summer of 2025 was the hottest on record as recorded by the MET Office with several heatwaves declared. Our drought plan was activated, and in May entered Level 1 due to the warm and dry conditions.

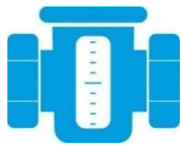
As a result, we experienced demands higher than the long-term average for the previous 5 years, which peaked at 396.3 MI/d in June - higher than previous years but lower than the highest to date, which was seen in 2022. Average day peak week was 376 MI/d, following the same trend.

The winter of 2025/26 saw a typical freeze/thaw event in early January due to a short cold snap where temperatures fell below freezing. This led to an increase in demand of 24 MI/d from one day to the next. There was an average increase of 11MI/d over approximately 14 days.

The extended warm dry summer of 2025/26 resulted in an average day demand of 330.4 MI/d, the highest to date, compared to the previous year of 320.3 MI/d and 324.6 MI/d in 2022.

The winter of 2025/26 saw some very wet months, with an overall long term average rainfall of 140% - in some parts of the region this was much higher. This provided the required recharge to restore reservoir levels to normal.

Other key points include the following:



Leakage

We have out turned 2025/26 with a leakage level of 56.0 MI/d (Post MLE). This compares to a WRMP24 2025/26 forecast position of 57.7 MI/d. Our outturn position is also on target with the Ofwat leakage commitment.



Water Efficiency

The volume of water that each of our household customers uses – the ‘per capita consumption’ (PCC) – was an average of 135.0 litres/head/day (l/h/d). The dry year annual average WRMP24 forecast average PCC is 147.4 l/h/d.



Metering

We have installed 23,697 new meters including optants, new connections and replacements.



Temporary or non-essential use bans

We have maintained our current levels of service. There have been no temporary or non-essential use bans during the annual review period.

2. Introduction

We published the latest WRMP for our South Staffs region in August 2024; this plan came into effect from 1 April 2025 for the period to 2050. We have used the WRMP24 2025/26 forecast and assumptions to compare outturn data, as stated in the guidance. The 2026 annual performance report (APR26) data covering the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 has been used to inform this review. The data used in APR26 has been through our assurance process.

This review is a statutory requirement of the Water Industry Act 1991 (as amended by the Water Act 2003), which states that:

Before each anniversary of the date when its plan was last published, the water undertaker shall –

- (a) Review its plan; and
- (b) Send a statement of the conclusions of its review to the Secretary of State.

The purpose of the annual review is to identify any material changes to the WRMP and to report on progress. We have carried out this review in accordance with the Environment Agency's latest guidance, which advises that we should:

- report on the progress against our WRMP;
- highlight any changes made to our WRMP;
- describe progress with key components of our WRMP;
- explain any changes to planned deliverables;
- describe any changes due to exceptional events;
- report on the actions the Defra, Ofwat and EA, asked us to work on after we published our final WRMP; and
- report an overall summary of the supply-demand situation.

2.1 Water resource zones, level of service and performance commitments

Item	Description	Company comment on review
Water resource zones	Any changes to boundaries or number of zones?	There have been no changes to the South Staffs region water resources zone boundary, which remains a single water resource zone for the region.
Planned levels of service	Any changes to the level of service?	There is no change to our customer level of service stated in WRMP24. We consulted extensively with our customers as we prepared our business plan, and they did not support a change to our levels of service, which are: • temporary use bans – not more than one in every 40 years; • non-essential use bans – not more than once every 80 years; and • emergency drought orders – not more than once in 200 years.
Performance commitments (PCs)	Progress on PCs that affect WRMP24	The Performance Commitments (PCs) relevant to WRMP24 are: • leakage. • PCC. • unplanned outage; and • our environmental programme (WINEP) obligations. We describe each of these topics in the chapters below on supply and demand. Other PCs and Performance Commitment Deliverables (PCDs) such as drought resilience, supply side options delivery also relate to WRMPs.

2.2 Overview of 2025/26 supply-demand balance

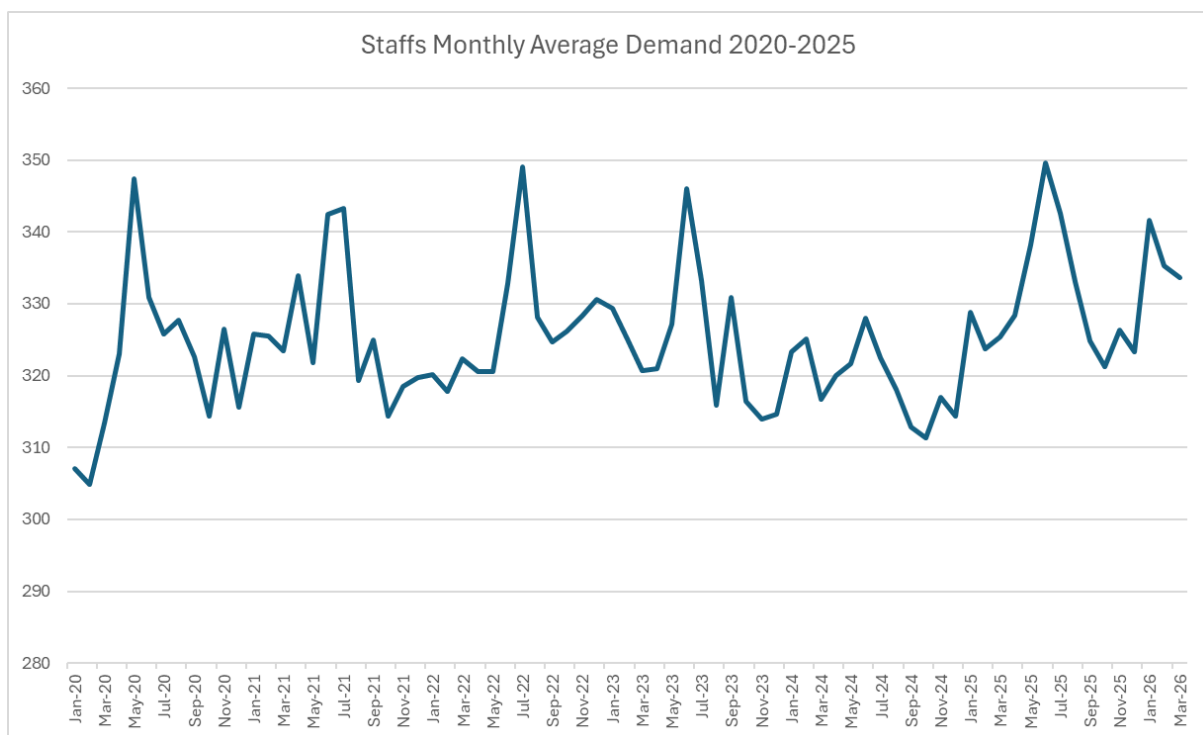
The reporting year saw a challenging summer in terms of demands, following a dry winter with 83.1% of LTA rainfall and 2025 overall seeing just 82.8% of average rainfall for the year. The spring of 2025 was the driest on record and the summer the hottest on record, with several heatwaves declared nationally. The warm dry weather led to high customer demands over the summer, with a peak demand of 396.3 MI/d on 30th June and a peak week demand of 376 MI/d. Only 2022 has seen demand at levels higher, and overall 2025/26 average day demand was 330.4 MI/d, the highest demand year to date.

The impact of the dry spring led to the level in Blithfield falling earlier than expected, and this continued into the summer due to the warm and continuing dry weather. In May we crossed moved into Level 1 of our drought plan and implemented associated actions to manage demands. Mid-August saw levels in Blithfield cross into Level 2 of our drought plan, triggering the consideration of implementing a temporary use ban (TUB). We undertook preparation to implement restrictions, however with careful consideration of the timing of restrictions, the time of year and forward-looking weather forecasts, our board decided not to implement a TUB for the short period it would be effective.

We also experienced a typical winter freeze/thaw event was seen in early January which saw a period of increased demand between 5th and 18th January 2026 due to increased leakage, of around 11 MI/d over the period.

Overall, it was a dry year with some exceptional weather leading to increased demands, the highest we have experienced to date.

Figure 1 Monthly DI profiles AR21 – AR26



The report year 2025/26 saw high summer demands, greater than previous years.

Overall, for 2025/26 average Distribution Input was 330.4 MI/d, compared to the dry year annual average (DYAA) forecast in WRMP24 of 327.63 MI/d. The outturn supply demand balance was 47.34 MI/d, compared to 2.03 MI/d forecast in WRMP24. Outage and household consumption were both significantly lower than WRMP forecast, and available supply greater than forecast.

The security of supply for our customers was not at risk during the report year and whilst we crossed drought trigger Level 2, with careful consideration of impacts and timings, we decided not to restrict customers' use.

2.3 Company-specific actions

In October 2025, we received a Joint Regulator Letter from the EA, Ofwat and Defra raising concerns around several areas in our WRMP24 Annual Review for 2024/25. We have made a formal response to all the issues raised, accompanied with a detailed action plan to resolve them. The main points are detailed below with summary updates provided; further details are in our response to the Joint Regulator Letter and our ongoing actions.

Supply Demand balance

Following several years of negative SDB in 2024/25 we outturned 2024/25 with a positive figure of 29.91 MI/d. However, we reported a negative SDB of -1.5 MI/d in our dry year annual average scenario which is based on a 1:500 year. This provides a DO of 421.8 MI/d. The DO includes the benefits of drought measures, it also includes an outage allowance of 17.2 and an operational use allowance which is uplifted by a dry year factor as per guidance. In a dry year these would be reduced below the planned allowance once drought measures were in effect. Because of this, the DYAA gives a slightly adverse view of the predicted SDB. If the tables took these adjustments into effect, we would still have a negative SDB but the deficit would be minimised to less than 1 MI/d.

For 2025/26 we are reporting a positive SDB in our outturn, but a minor deficit in our DYAA of -1.16 MI/d. As with 2024/25, this is driven from by the WRMP deployable output being based on a 1:500 year. As 2025 was a significantly dry year we entered level 2 of our drought plan by early August. This is the threshold for consideration of implementing a temporary use ban, and although we did not implement, it indicates 2025 was a 1:200 year return period. The uplifts in our DYAA are therefore proportioned to reflect the difference between a 1:200 and 1:500 conditions as the WRMP forecast are for 1:500.

Metering

Our metering forecasts in WRMP19 were based on customer optants. We did not receive the number of customer requests for a meter through AMP7 to meet the forecast penetration in WRMP19. We have seen that our customers are concerned about potentially receiving unexpected changes in bills from moving to a meter. Meter penetration is also impacted by new connections, which was also significantly below expected levels as the development in the region has slowed. Our universal metering programme during AMP8 will significantly increase our metering penetration, and we intend to make up AMP7 metering shortfalls over AMP8.

For 2025/26 the launch of the universal metering programme has seen us increase our metering penetration by 4% in the first year. We exceeded our install target and will continue to recover our AMP7 metering shortfalls throughout AMP8.

PCC

We reported that PCC continued to be a challenge for us in 2024/25 as a proportion of our customers now remain in the South Staffs area to work from home where previously they would have commuted out of the area to work. As we were continuing to see levels higher than our forecast at WRMP19, we incorporated a new baseline position for WRMP24. As we have increased our water efficiency efforts year on year since Covid we have seen reductions in PCC.

For 2025/26, following a review of our population data our PCC has been realigned and is now within both WRMP and Ofwat forecast. This is outlined in more detail in the PCC section of our WRMP24 AR response.

As well as reviewing our population, we have also had a strong focus on completing activities to support in reducing our PCC. Alongside population review we have also completed a minor component use assessment and plan to complete DMA MOTs in 2026/27. Additionally, we have prepared and launched our first behavioural change campaign in the South Staffs region, completed water audits alongside our universal metering and are trialling the installation of a number of flow regulators in new developments. Collectively we are focussing on identifying which measures create the most benefit for reducing our PCC in the region.

2.4 Dry year annual average

The AR26 outturn Annual Average distribution input of 330.40 MI/d was 2.77MI/d above the DYAA of 327.63 MI/d in WRMP24. Re-based demands from 2025 have brought this more into alignment with WRMP forecasts. The DYAA peaking factor applied to consumption in the AR was 1.86%, this is different to the WRMP24 forecast of 4.66% to represent the dry year conditions that were seen in the outturn data. Our drought plan triggers suggest that the period was similar to a 1:200 event, and the peak uplift factor has been adjusted proportionately to reflect this as per the WRMP24. This uplift has been applied in the dry year adjusted data table to all demand components.

For the supply components, the dry year uplifted table deployable output is stated as the 1:500 drought yield, adjusted for any additional dry year constraints, such as licence conditions. Raw water losses, treatment works losses and operational use is also uplifted as much of this is associated with surface water treatment works and would proportionately increase with demands.

Outage is calculated as a reduction against the WRMP24 Base Year licences, which are 1:500 yields, and is included only in the DYAA adjusted data table. The outage figure has not been uplifted by the dry year factor, as it was a dry year, and outage was reduced accordingly and less than the forecast.

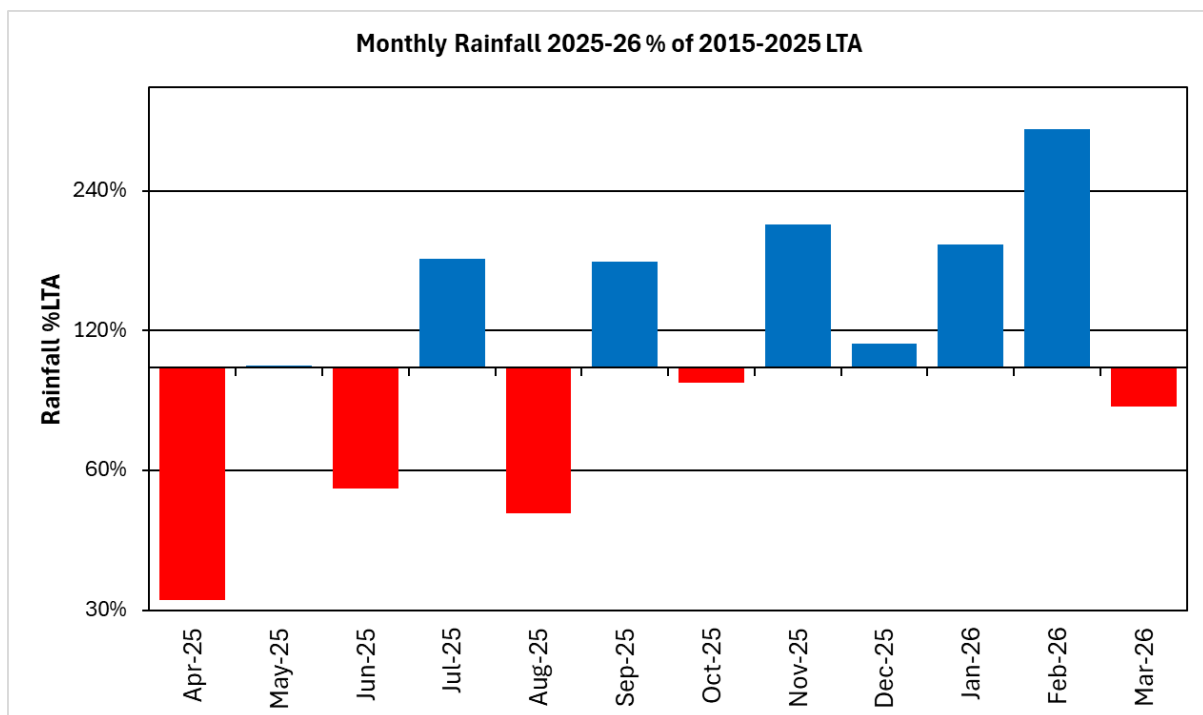
3. Supply

3.1 Impacts of weather events on supply

Total annual rainfall for the 2025/26 year at our Blithfield rain gauge was 874mm. This is 180.7% of the long-term average for the last 10 years. We monitor this rain gauge because of its proximity to our primary reservoir, which is where our drought triggers refer to. In addition, we refer to other sources of weather and hydrological information such as those found in the EA water situation reports.

Monthly rainfall in comparison to annual long-term averages is shown below.

Figure 2 Monthly rainfall 2025/26



The year started off with significantly below average rainfall, with a dry winter and a very dry spring. March was notably low with only 24.6% of long-term average rainfall. This continued into the summer with 74.6% of average rainfall overall for the summer period April to September. The lack of rainfall combined with high temperatures and the warmest summer on record, including four separate heatwaves being declared, led to the high demands seen over the period. Higher demands and reduced inflows saw levels in Blithfield Reservoir continuing to drop from spring into summer, earlier than typically seen. Levels dropped to 41% at their lowest, in September, lower than seen in 2022 (41.9%) and second only to levels in 1995 (35%). We entered Level 1 of our drought plan in May and Level 2 in August and implemented associated drought actions to manage demand.

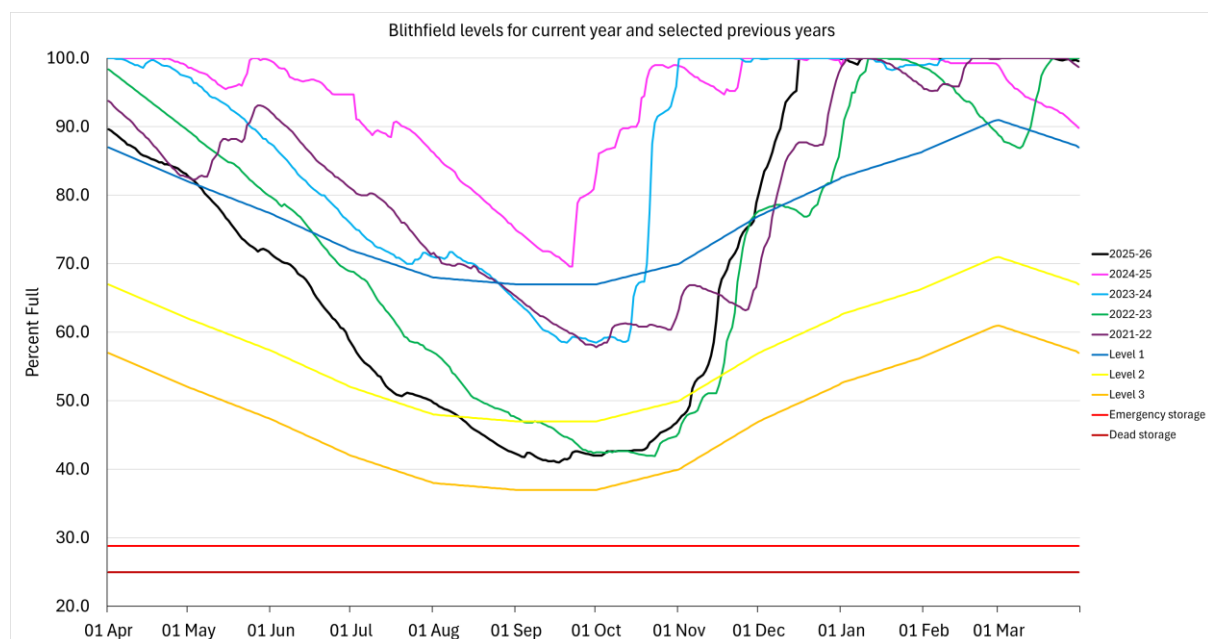
Lower river flows in the Blithe impacted our ability to utilise our pumpback scheme that can support levels in Blithfield reservoir, due to hands off flows being in effect for 87 days in

total over the summer. The lost benefit to Blithfield due to this is 24 MI/d and exacerbated the drop in levels. River levels in the Severn were such that Regulation conditions commenced in May and there were 86 regulation days until September. During regulation period our abstraction from our WTW were restricted by up to 28 MI/d (reductions are on the total abstraction over 100days, not necessarily daily). This contrasted with the previous year which saw only 8 days of regulation. As a result, during 2025 we carefully balanced the outputs from our surface WTW and groundwater sources to manage supply availability to meet the elevated demands seen.

Towards the end of 2025 there was a respite to the dry weather. Rainfall was 140% of the long-term average over the winter of 2025/26, with significant rainfall in September and November. This allowed levels in Blithfield to cease dropping in September and start to recover. By mid-December, Blithfield was at 100% capacity.

The graph below shows the levels in Blithfield reservoir during 2025/26 and in other selected years.

Figure 3. Blithfield levels for the review period and selected previous years



Groundwater storage and levels were not adversely impacted during the year.

3.1.1 Water Resources

Our raw water abstracted figure of 440.95 MI/d aligns with our abstraction licence returns. (Note: this includes the Chelmarsh Brook abstraction, which is often a minus figure due to compensation). We continue to monitor abstractions against licences closely with an abstraction planner by the Water Resources team to provide a guide for abstraction across the year to monitor our abstraction licences and efficiently balance our surface water and groundwater abstractions.

We continue to share our water resources situation with the EA by sending weekly situation reports on our strategic position and forecast changes that could affect our water supply and demand. This enables early sight of conservation measures, drought risk and the need for any drought measures.

3.2 Outage

Total outage for 2025/26 was 5.19 MI/d, lower than the WRMP24 DYAA forecast of 17.0 MI/d. This is mainly due to the response to the dry weather, with 4.12 MI/d of this unplanned outage, and planned outages reduced to ensure supply resilience. A downward adjustment was made to deployable output of 4 MI/d due to long term outage at Kinver. We continue to balance the need for essential work on our assets to be carried out with the need to be able to provide resilient supplies.

Outage is calculated according to the UKWIR standard methodology and EA guidance. This includes both planned and unplanned outage and differs to the Ofwat methodology for calculating performance commitment outage as this excludes some types of outages. Therefore, they are not comparable.

The mode of failure for outages and duration within the period is summarised below. The greatest amount of outage is attributed to planned works or essential cleaning, this is to ensure delivery of capital maintenance programme. The number of days outage do not always lead to the full loss of deployable output at sources; some were able to operate at a reduced capacity.

Table 1 Outage breakdown

Outage category	Total Days
Power failures	2
Planned works	348
Treatment issues	211
Raw water quality	332

Our regular maintenance plan continues, and we continue to utilise our outage planner to reduce the risk of planned outage and maintenance work impacting on the supply demand balance. Our unplanned outage policy tracks outage using a traffic light system for escalation of outages in relation to extended period of downtime and impact on supply.

- Green: water resources and demand are normal; unplanned outage to be responded to next working day.
- Amber: water resources are below average or demand is above average; unplanned outage to be responded to same day.
- Red: water resources are below average and we are below the drought monitoring curve; unplanned outage must be responded to within 2 hours.

During the year planned outage was carefully managed through the periods of high demands and cancelled for periods of peak demand.

3.3 Water Quality

The below details the current DWI notice we have:

Southern WTW – SST-2021-00001 *Disinfection by-products, taste and odour, customer acceptability, and Clostridium perfringens*

Hampton Loade receives variable raw water quality due to its abstraction from the River Severn. At certain times of the year, increases in geosmin are observed. To mitigate this, flows through the works are reduced to manage taste and odour issues, with output balanced by increased flows from Seedy Mill. During the past two summers, this was managed as business as usual, without concern. An upgrade to the treatment process for reducing geosmin in the raw water has also been completed. As well as this, an additional treatment process has address the other parameters listed in the notice, of which is has now undergone its 12-month review and is awaiting sign-off from the DWI.

Northern WTW – SST-2024-00003 *THM*

Process optimization and potential capital investment to prevent trihalomethane (THM) formation risk.

Southern and Northern Distribution Network – SST-2018-00004 *Disinfection by-products and customer acceptability*

This notice covers combined issues associated with the above sites. Completion of the long-term improvement works at these locations has resolved the identified concerns. This notice has now undergone its 12-month review and is awaiting sign-off from the DWI.

Kinver WTW – SST-2018-00001 *Increasing nitrate trends and failure of blending regime*

There were increasing trends in nitrate concentrations and a risk of blending failure (involving Cookley Pumping Station), which could result in exceeding PCV limits. To mitigate this, both boreholes at Kinver WTW were relined to a lower depth and pumping levels reduced. At Cookley WTW, Borehole 3 has been relined to a depth of 90 m (from 30 m). These works were completed in 2025 and awaiting further data reviews to identify the success of the solutions.

Slade Heath Pumping Station – SST-2019-00002 *Chlorthal and pesticide removal*

Granular activated carbon (GAC) is currently used to manage pesticide removal. The long-term solution is the implementation of ion exchange treatment, due for completion in 2027.

Sutton Coldfield Zone – SST-2023-00004 *Customer complaints (discolouration)*

Improvements to the aesthetic water quality. Including manganese removal at source works and mains remediation works.

Fradley WTW – SST-2023-00005

Treatment upgrades to meet antimony concentration limits.

Air valves (network wide) – SST-2025-00001

Risk assessments of air valves to manage contamination risks.

3.4 Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP)

The below details our progress against deliverables for 2025/26.

3.4.1 Sustainability Changes

For WRMP19, our approach to the sustainability reductions required in AMP7 was to include the medium position (of three possible scenarios we identified) within our baseline assessment of DO, which is a reduction of 6 MI/d.

For WRMP24, we have agreed sustainability reductions of 18.67 from 2029-30, and an additional 3.67MI/d from 2030/31. We have continued to work with the Environment Agency to better understand the risks and implement and refine these figures prior to implementing solutions

We have also commenced a project to deploy a range of in-channel and catchment improvements on the Darnford Brook with supplementary monitoring. This work, in addition to the future agreed licence changes, will provide environmental benefits in the catchment.

We have made no alterations to the indicative sustainability changes included in our WRMP24, which are zero for 2025/26.

3.5 Deployable output (DO)

As last year, revisions to the WRMP24 AR tables no longer include a deployable output figure for outturn data, which now report total water into supply instead of water available for use (WAFU).

The DYAA adjusted tables include deployable output, which is WRMP24 deployable output, adjusted for long term reductions to supply. These adjustments are as follows;

- A reduction of 4.0 MI/d has been made to the WRMP24 figure due to long term outage at Kinver sourceworks due to the requirement of a capital scheme to support the reduction in nitrates.

Following these adjustments, the WRMP figure of 422.10 MI/d is therefore adjusted for 2025/26 to 418.10 MI/d in the DYAA adjusted table. No Critical Period (DYCP) is forecast for WRMP24.

3.6 Water available for use

Once minor imports and exports have been accounted for, operational use, raw water and treatment works losses are deducted 2025/26 total WAFU is reported as 345.44 MI/d, 5.74MI/d above WRMP24 Final Plan of 339.70 MI/d. Outturn Water into Supply is 377.74 MI/d.

3.7 Bulk supply agreements

We provide several bulk water supplies to Severn Trent Water - including a significant volume from our River Severn treatment works - and receive a very small number in return. We have several emergency bulk supply points close to our border so that we can share resources if the need arises.

There have been no changes to bulk supply agreements during the review period.

3.8 Imported and exported potable water

Outturn potable water imported is 0.45 MI/d and potable water exported is 40.1 MI/d. These are legacy cross border supplies to and from neighbouring water companies and are not subject to bulk supply agreements and are under standard commercial terms and consumption varies based on demands.

3.9 New appointments and variations (NAVS)

As per previous annual returns, we have included supplies for NAVs in our total DI figure, we continue to see an increase in these volumes as new NAVs are granted licences in our area, and existing developments are populated. As such, we are now monitoring these separately and can report on consumption volumes separately.

The bulk transfer agreement indicates the maximum demand the development can take, but the actual demand is measured using meters on our network, and this volume is included in total distribution input.

The following table outlines the existing NAVs in our area:

Table 2 Licensed water undertakers in the South Staffs area

Licensed undertaker	Number of sites in SST operating area	Properties
Independent Water Networks Limited	9	2464
Leep Networks (Water) Limited	4	2811
ESP Water Limited	6	2001
Icosa Water	2	170
Advanced Water Infrastructure	2	643
Total	23	8089

We are working with the NAVs on key topics within the WRMP. We will continue to work with these organisations, and others that may be granted licences in our area, to ensure a consistent approach to these areas.

3.10 Climate change impact on supply

We completed work on the impacts of climate change for WRMP24. We have made no changes to this nor to any other changes to our supply forecast. There has been no change to deployable output due to climate change, and so this has not been included in our deployable output figure

3.11 Unbilled water

Unbilled water consists of the sum of legal and illegal unbilled water.

Legal unbilled water is the volume of water used by our customers and not billed such as standpipe water use, voids with consumption and accounts held in query. Components are measured company specific estimates, this year it was 3.18 MI/d.

Illegal unbilled water is, by the very nature of this component, an estimated volume. It is generally described as water theft and covers water use which the company is not generally aware of. This year it was 1.67 MI/d. These estimates go through an annual auditing process.

In total water taken unbilled was 4.84 MI/d compared to the forecast of 1.76MI/d.

We have had a strong focus on reviewing and identifying the mis-use of standpipes across our region which has supported our understanding, as well as providing us with a strong position on potential enforcement action if required.

3.12 Distribution system operational use (DSOU)

In 2025/26 DSOU was 1.31 MI/d, compared to forecast of 0.42 MI/d, this use of potable water incorporates uses from our network due to operational reasons and is not leakage or customer use. Treatment work losses and other operational use such as run to waste and not recorded in distribution input was 23.45 MI/d compared to the forecast of 21.37 MI/d.

3.13 Drought Plan

Our current drought plan was published in April 2022 and there have been no changes to this since this date. Our revised draft plan was published in 2026 for consultation as per the 5 yearly review cycle. We have undertaken a review of drought triggers and supply options. We have removed the Blithfield potable infusion option following work on benefits and risks, and updated our drought permits following licence changes and revised the plan according to new guidance.

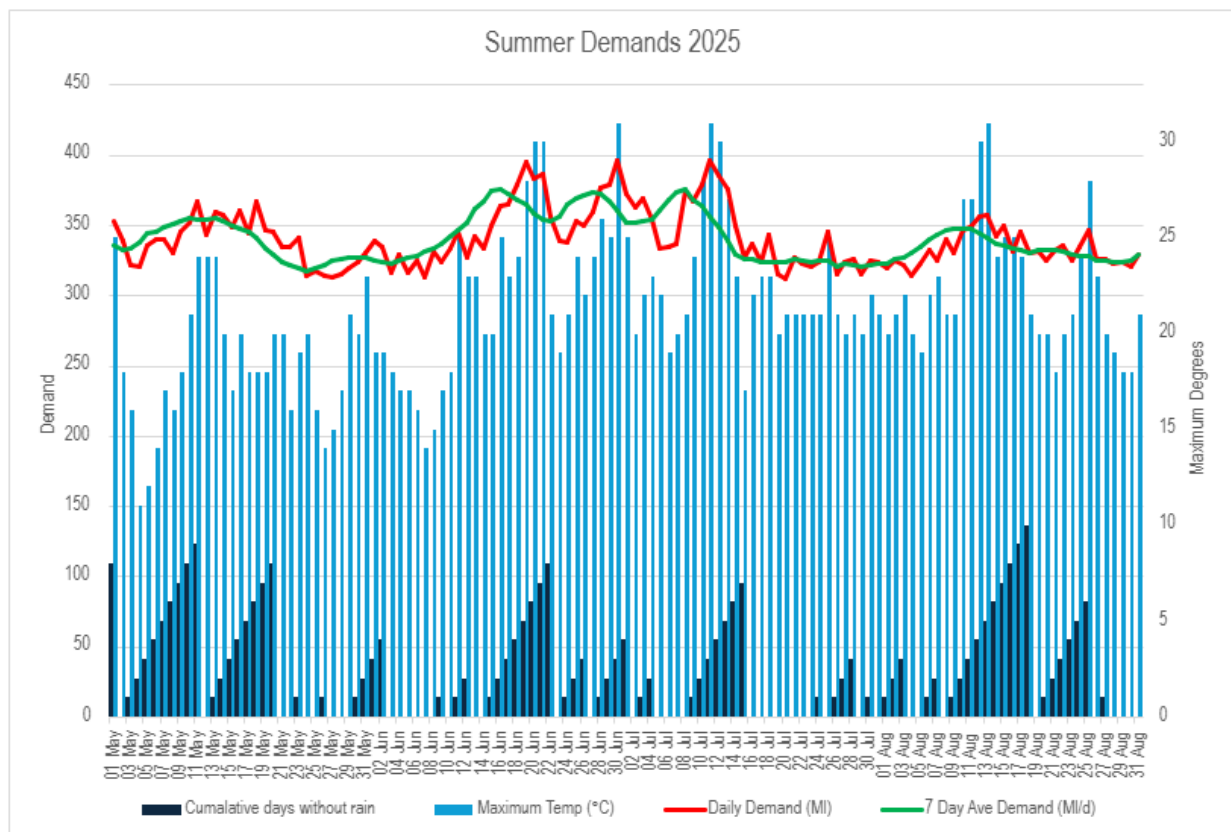
If the revised plan is accepted through the consultation process now underway, a revised draft will be published in Autumn 2026. It is not expected that any proposed changes will impact the WRMP and require it to be updated.

4. Demand

4.1 Impact of weather events on demand

The peak demand period in 2025/26 was seen over 16th - 13th July 2025, with a peak day of 396.3 MI/d. Average Day peak week was 376 MI/d coinciding with one of the warmest periods of the year (there were several heat waves in 2025, however as the June heat wave fell outside school holidays we saw the highest demand then. In terms of overall demands 2025/26 was a high demand year. The spring of 2025 was the driest on record and this contributed to higher demand.

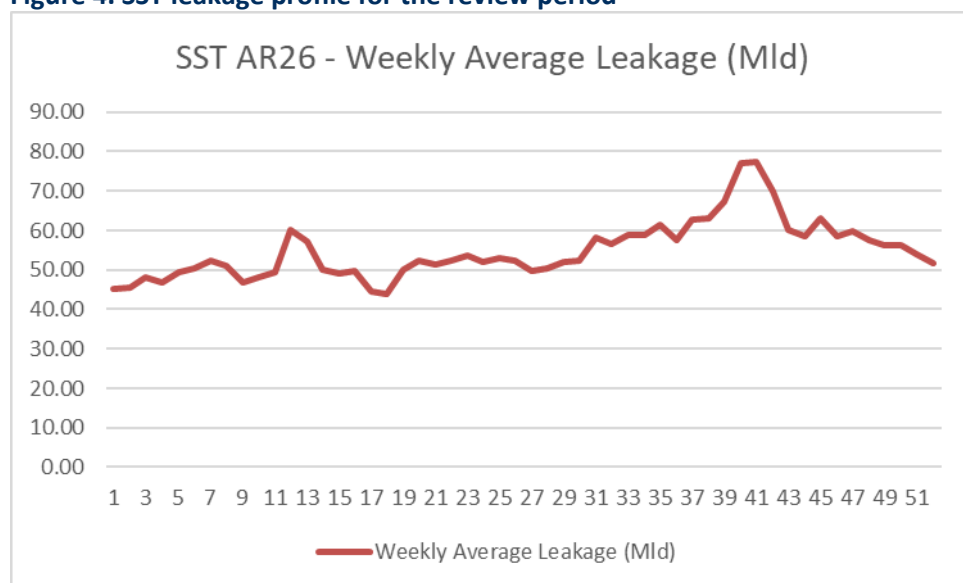
Figure 3. Summer 2025 weather vs demand



The winter of 2025/26 did see a freeze/thaw event between 5th and 18th January 2026 seeing a period of increased demand due to increased leakage, of around 11 MI/d over the period.

The overall leakage profile for the year can be seen below:

Figure 4. SST leakage profile for the review period



4.2 Demand Profile

The Post MLE Distribution Input (DI) is 330.4 MI/d. The Annual Review 2025/26 DI is 0.8% higher than the dry year annual average forecast in the WRMP24 of 327.63MI/d.

As the year saw a drought and hot dry conditions this outturn is in line with expectations for a dry year. Our rebased demand forecast from 2025 indicates that the revised forecast for dry year conditions has improved.

4.2.1 Leakage

Leakage has continued to reduce from AMP7 into AMP8 and is below forecast for 2025/26, reporting 56.0 MI/d vs a forecast figure of 57.75 MI/d.

4.2.2 Per Household Consumption (PHC)

Table 2 shows the movement of Household Consumption (excluding Supply Pipe Leakage and Meter Under Registration) for the period 2019/20 (pre-covid) to AR26 (MI/d).

Consumption was lower in 2025/26 than the WRMP24 forecast for both measured household consumption and unmeasured household consumption, by a total of 20.8 MI/d. Household demands below the forecast, are reflected in our low PCC and continued water efficiency efforts. Overall, we expect demands to be on track with our WRMP forecast.

Table 2 Household consumption profile to data vs WRMP24 forecast

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	WRMP24 Forecast 2025/26
Measured Household consumption excluding SPL and MUR (Ml/d)	56	63	71	64	60	67	79.0	96.8
Unmeasured Household consumption (Ml/d)	113	138	132	130	126	123	124.8	127.7
Total Household Consumption (Ml/d)	169	201	203	194	186	190	203.8	224.6

4.2.3 Per Capita Consumption (PCC)

In 2025/26 we have worked with CACI to improve the estimate of population, which is a critical value for per capita consumption normalisation.

Historically, we have only reviewed population estimates every five years, during the WRMP process, where a forecast of population growth is made. However, as time passes this forecast becomes out of date, a risk which is greater during periods of rapid population change as the UK has experienced in recent years as a result of large levels of immigration. There is also a lag to demographic data available from the ONS and other sources, leading to a risk that an infrequent assessment does not capture the real position due to the timing of the assessment and data available to it.

During WRMP24, the latest assessment, we did not commission our own population study in the SST region, as we have done in previous WRMP submissions. We instead utilised the results of a study undertaken by Severn Trent.

The WRMP occupancy rate was assumed to be broadly static for SST. This means that whilst population was forecast to increase broadly in line with property growth, the density of people within existing and new property was assumed to be broadly static. The CACI data set for 2025/26, alongside further data sets developed by KELP based on 2021 Census data which we had previously commissioned but not utilised fully, show that occupancy rate is increasing rather than being stable, when normalised against property growth.

We can see by examining industry data since 2011 that two thirds of companies have occupancy rate growth over this period, whereas the SSC rate is static. Our immediate neighbours, Severn Trent, have occupancy rate growth of 7% over this period. Since

2019/20, Severn Trent has a real 3% occupancy rate growth. Even over a short period since 2021/22, Severn Trent has 2.6% real occupancy growth.

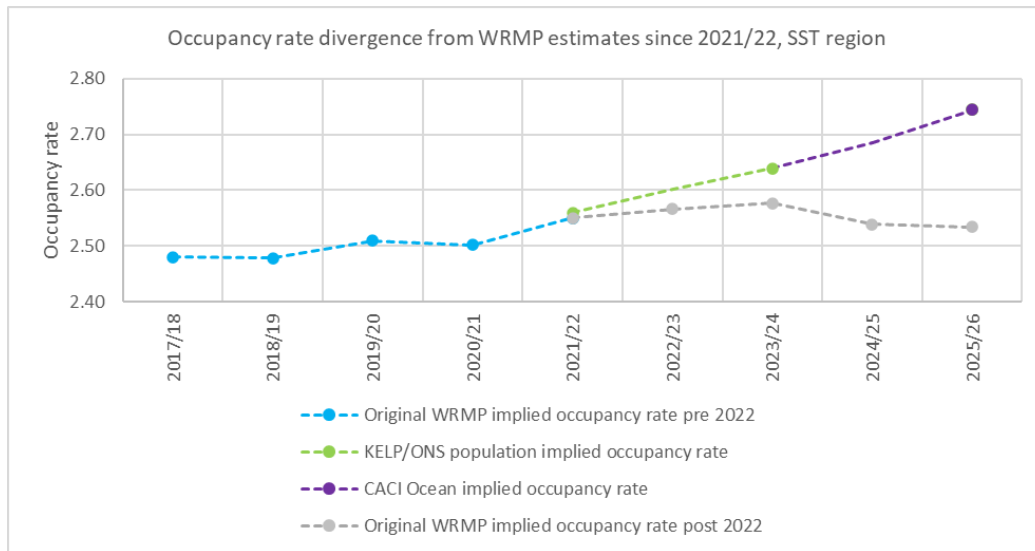
The CACI data, which is the latest data point available, is based on CACI's new 'Ocean' property level model. The model is based on an ONS census sourced, and third-party enhanced, dataset which models property level occupancy data. We supplied our property database to CACI who mapped on their occupancy model. In the SST region we had a matching success rate of 97.7% and in CAM a success rate of 96.5%. We note that United Utilities used the same data source in APR25 to update their population estimate.

From this data we can determine an average occupancy rate for 2025/26, which can then be applied to our actual residential property count, excluding voids and NAVs, to estimate a total population value. This updated estimate is as follows:

Attribute	SST region
Updated occupancy rate from CACI Ocean, 2025/26	2.74
APR26 residential properties excluding voids	549,867
Total population estimate for 2025/26	1,509,285
Original WRMP population estimate for 2025/26	1,393,520
Difference between revised and original estimates	+115,765 (+8.3%)

We do not have a CACI Ocean data set for years prior to 2025/26, as their latest model is new, however we do have access to external consultancy work carried out by KELP in Spring 2025 deriving population estimates for our regions primarily from ONS statistics.

Taken together (shown on the chart below), these estimates clearly demonstrate that our occupancy rate projections since 2021/22, in the SST region, have been too low, and we are not accounting for a critical rising population density within this supply region, that is having influence on water demand.

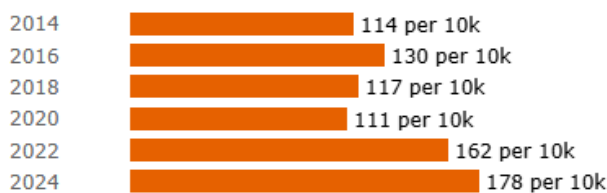


Particularly of note is the drop in occupancy rate from 2024/25 onwards in the original WRMP forecasts, which does not make sense given the demographics of the region (highly industrial and dense, with large groups of ethnic minority populations), and the population increases evidenced at regional and national level recently.

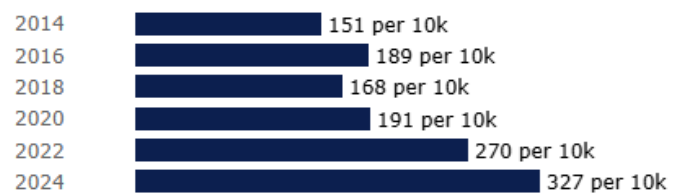
The KELP and CACI data points show how occupancy begins to diverge from the original WRMP forecasts from approximately 2021/22. The revision is not extreme initially, but the continued rising trend builds to a significant gap against the previously assumed flat, and later decreasing, profile. As the divergence begins since approximately 2021/22, there is no evidence to suggest that the data before this was materially incorrect, and so the baseline years 2017/18 through 2019/20 are unaffected.

The growth in population in the region and UK generally is supported by third party data and reports. For example, the West Midlands State of the Region 2024-2025 report states that in a single year from 2021 to 2022 the population of grew by 1.1%. Note the lag on that figure as it is from 2022 in a 2024-2025 report. A tool available from the Migration Observatory¹ also shows an acceleration in regional immigration since 2022, which has grown more quickly than then UK as a whole. Applicable regions in and around our SST supply area are Birmingham, Walsall and Sandwell, see charts below from the website (link in footnotes).

United Kingdom

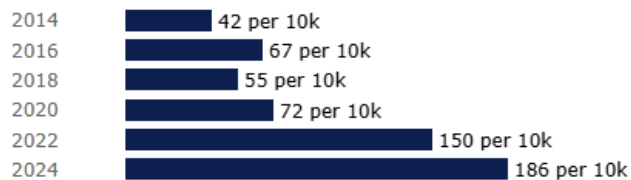


Birmingham

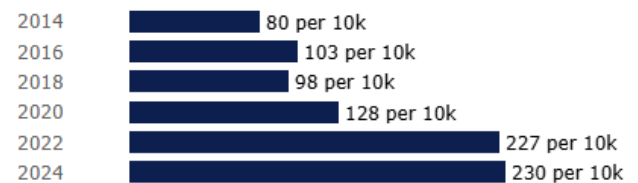


¹ [Local data on migrants in the UK - Migration Observatory](#)

Walsall



Sandwell



The lag in this data being available means that when the WRMP was assessed in approximately 2023, data was only available from c. 2021, which was before the more rapid growth started to occur and be seen within the available data sources.

Impact on PCC

Population is a critical value for per capita consumption, as it is used to normalise absolute consumption into a per person estimate of usage. This means PCC is very sensitive to population, unlike absolute consumption which is measured and tested through the water balance process.

An incorrect population value will mean the normalised estimate of per capita consumption is not correct, especially when population has risen so rapidly over a short space of time which has not been detected due to the lag in obtaining these types of statistics.

With this update, we have outturned a 2025/26 PCC of 135 l/h/d, against a WRMP forecast of 147.4 l/h/d.

This is not a methodology change. Whilst previously we did not update population regularly, doing so now is correctly ensuring we are reflecting the most robust and up to date estimate of population within the same overall water balance methodology. This means that we have the most robust and accurate alignment between population and consumption that we can to explain the breakdown of water use.

We have externally assured this population update with our independent technical assurers, Jacobs, covering the CACI data, the triangulation with the KEMP data, and our wider rationale on the overall recent immigration and population increase trends which support this update.

4.3 Non-Household Consumption

Since 'Open Water' came into force in 2017, non-household customers have had the choice of selecting their own retail billing company. As a result, we now access meter reading and consumption data via the 'Central Market Operating System' (CMOS), with a monthly report

generated from merging the CMOS consumption reports with our own consumptions reports. The water balance working group has worked with our retail helpdesk to continue to improve the consumption data we receive.

Our measured non-household consumption in 2025/26 was 64.46 MI/d, which is slightly higher than the WRMP24 forecast of 63.19 MI/d. We have started our non-household water efficiency campaigns to support the reduction in non-household consumption.

4.3.1 Development

1,431 new connections were made in 2025/26. This is below the new build properties forecast of 4,723, but does not include all NAV properties, where property numbers are within demand treated as a bulk supply for connection purposes.

4.3.2 Demand forecast, including population and property forecasting

We comprehensively revise our demand forecasts every five years. This was undertaken to inform our WRMP24 to update population, properties and forecast consumptions for the planning period. For 2025/26 outturn domestic properties connected was 579,235, above the forecast of 654,610.

5. Metering

In 2025/26 we moved from our WRMP19 strategy of meter optants to increase our penetration to our WRMP24 AMP8 Universal Metering policy. This applies to domestic customers and sits alongside a programme to upgrade non household customers to AMI smart meters. By installing over 23 thousand meters in 2025/26, this has contributed to our metering penetration increasing by 4.8%.

Households are still entitled to opt for a free meter installation prior to the universal metering, however we are focusing our communications for the universal metering programme. By the end of AMP8 we aim to achieve meter penetration as close to 100% as is possible, having incorporated the catch up from AMP7.

The metering delivery table outlines our progress in meter installs throughout AMP7 and 2025/26. This figures that build up this table is aligned to the metering programme table submitted in March 2026, although as noted in our response to the metering tables the calculation for meter penetration in that table, along with this additional data table, differ from the WRMP and WRMP AR guidance. This means our metering penetration is shown as higher in this sheet, than it is on our out turn sheets.

It demonstrates that as per the guidance given during the previous submission, our installations during AMP7 were classed as AMR, and our AMP8 installations are classed as AMI. We do not have a value recorded for “total before 19/20” and therefore we have used the 2019/20 figure to enable the table to calculate a response.

Although our AMI meters are not currently acting in a smart capacity, earlier this year, we successfully appointed our smart metering network provider. We are now progressing a retrofit campaign to upgrade existing meters to smart capability, alongside the installation of AMI meters this summer for all new universal metering and optant installations across both our regions.

As more of our customers move to smart meters the level of data we receive will increase, which will improve our capability to complete targeting water efficiency engagement with our customers. We need to ensure we can manage this data effectively and share this with customers in a way that is beneficial, therefore at this point in time we are not producing an app for customers to use, but are instead focussing on ensuring we increase our metering penetration and internal processes to deal with the additional data.

In 2025/26, 23,697 AMI enabled meters were installed for domestic household properties. This demonstrates the effectiveness of our universal metering programme in increasing meter penetration, as it was 19,998 more meters installed than the previous year through optional switching alone. This is over a 4% increase on our household metering penetration.

We installed 1,308 upgraded AMI meters to non-households and 2 new AMI meters to previously unmetered non-household premises. Additionally, we replaced 577 non-household meters.

We have also had 1,431 new connections, both domestic and non-household, to our network which all have meters fitted.

As such, the year-end total meter penetration for 2025/26 is 47.8%. This compares to the WRMP24 forecast meter penetration (including voids) of 49.5%.

5.1 Leakage

Total leakage in 2025/26 is 56.0 MI/d. This compares to our Ofwat target of 59.9 MI/d and the WRMP24 forecast of 57.75 MI/d. We are now achieving our Ofwat three year rolling target.

2025/26 brought a range of climatic conditions that impacted leakage levels. During spring and summer period we suffered a prolonged dry weather period. Coupled with several heatwaves, we saw very low levels of soil moisture deficit. This drying out of the ground led to ground movement and an increase in leaks located and repaired on the network. Following on from this, we also experienced a freeze thaw event later in the year which also caused a breakout of leakage. Whilst we have experienced colder and longer freeze events in some previous years the impact was more pronounced. This is because of the significant changes in ground conditions across the year. Summer saw the very dry ground, then heavy rain in autumn, then the freezing and thawing later in the year led to a compounded impact.

All our leaks are mapped and fed into our asset management database to inform our future mains renewals programme. We keep this up to date with the latest data and if we see any changes to priority areas as a result, we are able to adapt our renewal programme throughout the AMP.

We continue to calculate bottom-up leakage using data obtained from DMAs, which monitor an area of approximately 1,000 to 2,000 properties. We provide further details of our 2025/26 leakage and PCC performance in the annual performance report (APR) that we will submit to Ofwat in July 2026.

5.2 Consistency in reporting methodology

We achieved full audit compliance in 2025/26 for per capita consumption in both regions.

5.3 Water efficiency

We have continued with our BAU water efficiency activities. These include:

- Use of Get Water Fit – online and virtual customer water efficiency audits and provision of water saving devices.
- Water efficiency messaging with social media and our website.
- Engagement at local community events promoting metering and sharing water efficiency advice and products.

- Education in schools in our region.
- Offering of incentives to Developers for water efficient house building.

During 2025/26 we distributed almost a thousand water saving devices through our water audits alongside universal metering, over 14,000 devices through our Get Water Fit platform. Together this saved circa 0.17 Ml/d in the South Staffs region.

The WRMP24 target position for average PCC at the end of 2025/26 was 147.4 l/p/d. Our actual outturn is 135.0 l/p/d.

In year 2 we will continue with a range of message to focus on reducing our PCC. We will continue our water audits alongside universal metering, and are trialling offering these alongside any optant meter installs. Alongside a continuation of Get Water Fit offering, and expect to see similar benefits as we consistently achieve these year on year. Additionally, we are trialling flow restrictors on some areas.

To focus on behavioural change, in year 2 we are launching our first behavioural change campaign in the South Staffs region, celebrating Water Champions.

5.3.1 Options Benefit Delivery

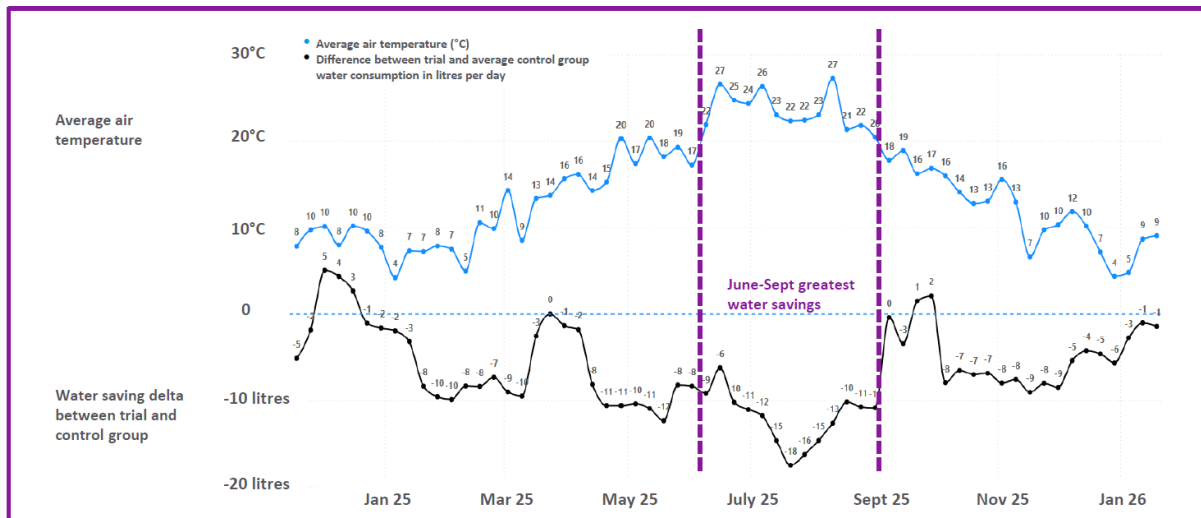
The new Options Benefit Delivery tab outlines the benefits achieved through the actions taken in 2025/26. This aligns with the new Water Environment and Security of Supply Metric, as submitted in April this year, and our Ofwat table 6F.

The tab only outlines where we have completed activities to enhance our performance, it therefore does not represent the activities that we have done to maintain base. For example, we completed more leakage activities than in previous years, but this was due to address an increased number of leaks seen and to maintain performance.

Historically we have not recorded benefits in the way that this table has requested the data. Historic returns of table 6F has been used as a guide, but it does not cover the lines 14-25, and 28-29, 34. It is not possible to gather this historic information.

5.3.2 Nectar scheme

We continue to support the Ofwat innovation trial project which has now been live for 18 months. Circa 4,900 customers have been recruited onto the trial and performance is monitored against a control group. Emerging findings indicate a moderate to strong negative correlation between air temperature and water consumption, as shown in the chart below. Customers are incentivised by award of nectar points based on “winning streaks” i.e. customers achieve gold tier for 3 weeks water savings, platinum tier for 4 weeks water savings etc. The programme looks to trial different incentives and tiers to see which drives the biggest water savings with customers. There is also a range of behavioural science trials to test looking at email update frequency, whose voice works best and whether individual responsibility vs collective action is a larger motivator.



5.3.3 Non-household consumption reduction

In 2025/26 we launched our first targeted campaign of water efficiency on NHH users and through two separate workstreams we saved 0.29 MI/d in our Cambridge region. Following agreement from the relevant retailers we worked with two external companies to complete different NHH water efficiency approaches.

In one project we part funded whole building water efficiency retrofits at over 100 NHHs, across hotels, coffee shops and supermarkets. In the other project, the company used a tool to identified super high water users in comparison to other NHHs within the same industry category. On site water audits identified a range of issues from internal wastage to supply pipe leakage. Following advice, customers addressed these issues to reduce the significant bill impacts.

6. Headroom and options

6.1 Target headroom

We update our target headroom every five years as part of the WRMP process. This was recently undertaken for the WRMP24 update.

We have included the WRMP24 target headroom of 10.4 MI/d in our DYAA adjusted data tables for this submission. We have not uplifted target headroom for the dry year factor as this is not appropriate for the uncertainties included in headroom.

6.2 Supply-demand balance

We have a positive outturn supply demand balance for 2025/26 of 47.34 MI/d compared to the forecast of 2.03MI/d for a dry year. This is following revised methodologies for the representation of outage in the supply demand balance calculation.

The DYAA adjusted supply demand balance is -1.15 MI/d, similar to the previous year, and a reflection of planned outages required for continued delivery of our capital maintenance plan combined with dry year conditions.

7. Forward look

2025/26 has seen us deliver strong performance in key areas such as household consumption and leakage. Our outturn position is favourable against the WRMP24 forecast.

Weather effects on supply and demand through the year were challenging, with several warm dry spells, heatwaves and record temperatures. This alongside the lack of rainfall impacted levels in our Blithfield reservoir and we activated our drought plan and reached our level 2 triggers. Much of the country was in drought, and many companies had TUBs in effect, however with careful planning and a forward-looking view we managed to avoid the need to implement TUBS as this trigger was late in the year and rainfall arrived to support the reservoir inflows. Overall, the year was a dry year and saw the high average day demands however our water resources position recovered well following rainfall in September and the impact on reservoir levels seen during the spring and summer soon receded.

Despite a challenging year we have ensured that customers have a secure supply of high-quality water, provided in an environmentally sustainable way, out turning a positive SDB despite the conditions.

We continue to focus on reducing unplanned outages, and have completed treatment upgrades to our surface water WTWs, which have reduced outages due to raw water quality.

We have been able to further improve our leakage position and now remain on target for both the WRMP forecast and the Ofwat performance commitment throughout AMP8. Our universal metering rollout has been a success and has rapidly increased total meter penetration in just one year - this will have supported in our improved PCC performance.

The review of the population served, with the addition of our demand management activities has meant we have met the forecast for PCC in 2025/26. With a continuation of our activities we are forecast to remain within PCC forecast throughout AMP8.

The winter of 2025/26 saw above average rainfall, and this was critical in ensuring our water resources position returned to normal for the end of the period. We are pleased that careful decision making together with forecasting data enabled us to refrain from the need to implement TUBs.

Our drought plan was updated during 2025 and published in 2026 for public consultation and includes a few minor changes to our supply options, and updates to meet the revised guidance. If the revision is supported it is due to be published in 2027, and there will be no changes to the WRMP required at this time.

For the new planning period with WRMP24 we have made stretching commitments to continue to manage demands with an ambitious metering programme to reach universal metering with Smart meters, alongside water efficiency activity. This programme is well underway, and we are already seeing the benefits from the successful metering programme.

This programme has been well received by customers with the aid of an extensive and informative communications programme informing of the reasons behind our metering strategy, and to reassure more vulnerable customers that support is available. Our water efficiency objectives will allow us to meet abstraction reductions to remove the risk of environmental deterioration in the region, without the need to develop any additional supply side options.

We continue to work with all sectors in the region and with groups like Water Resources West to ensure abstraction is sustainable and meets the needs of water users and the environment in our area of supply. WRW is expanding work with the non-PWS sectors, as it seeks to bring additional engagement and input from these sectors to support the development of the next regional plan.