

Water Resources & Abstraction Licensing: Discussion Summary



Abstraction issues to be considered (1)

Abstraction from peat catchments

Awaiting Defra's England Lowland Peat Strategy

Availability of grants to manage peat land differently currently uncertain.

Peat important for carbon sequestration

Updated Abstraction Licensing Strategy to consider effects on peat

Planning permission for water storage reservoirs

No specific planning policy in West Lancs Council

Visual impact concerns have been raised for some previous applications

Planning policy in Sefton Council uncertain

Guidance on water storage reservoirs in Alt-Crossens would be welcomed

Constraints around water storage reservoirs

Capital cost – grants available for 40% of capital

Can farmers/growers share a water storage facility ?

Infrastructure needed to connect storage to irrigators

Can ponds be used for farm water storage?

Can water be transferred from storage across catchment boundaries?

Can rivers/canal/drainage system be used to connect water storage reservoir to irrigators?

Abstraction issues to be considered (2)

Limited reliable supply of water in drought

Enforcement of illegal abstraction & impoundment

Consider sharing of licensed volumes between farmers?

Consider switching to groundwater in some areas?

Co-operative licensing sharing could be considered for some areas?

More flexibility in abstraction licences within a defined area?

What incentives could be given to switch to trickle irrigation?

Abstraction Licensing Issues

Concern about a “use it or lose it” policy elsewhere

Licensing policy for water storage reservoir abstraction

Can abstractors have a combined spray irrigation and trickle irrigation licence for flexibility?

High cost of switching from spray to trickle irrigation licence

Licensing policy for groundwater – is there any available?

Improved water management ideas

Better
integrated
management
of water in
catchment

Can UU store more
stormwater to reduce
flood risk and make it
available in drier
weather to support
flows/levels?

Use of nature-based solutions to
store flood water and release the
water in drier weather to support
flows/levels

Future role of a Water Level
Management Board under
Environment Act 2021?

Better co-ordination across UU, Highways Authorities and local
authorities to manage water in times of flood and drought

Potential groundwater licence trading between UU and some
farmers/growers to optimise use of water resources?

Next workshop and site visits

- Site visits welcomed during 2022, including to see:
 - new trickle irrigation methods
 - farm water storage solutions
 - farm water efficiency measures

Another workshop in March 2022 to cover:

- ELMS further update
- Trickle vs spray irrigation licensing issues
- Sharing of water abstraction licences
- Co-operative licensing / storage options
- Water Level Management Board – update on developments
- Update on grants available
- Update on the EA Abstraction Licensing Strategy (ALS) for the Alt-Crossens catchment