



Revised Draft Drought Plan

2022-2027

Consultation: Statement of response

WONDERFUL ON TAP



Statement of Response

Introduction

We published our draft Drought Plan (2022-2027) and the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for consultation in June 2021. The Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment were available on request. The consultation period ended on 27th July 2021. We were pleased to receive comments on our draft Drought Plan from eight different stakeholders.

We received representations from the following organisations:

Organisation	Abbreviation
Canal and River Trust	CRT
Consumer Council for Water	CCW
Environment Agency	EA
Erewash Borough Council	-
Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership	-
Historic England	HE
Natural England	NE
Natural Resources Wales / Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru	NRW

This is our Statement of Response (SoR) and it shows how we have addressed each of the comments and suggestions that we have received on our draft drought plan, SEA, HRA and WFD assessment. In this document we list the comments that we received from each organisation, and in Section 2 we explain what we have done as a result. In some cases we have made changes to our draft Drought Plan, which are reflected in the revised version published alongside this SoR. In other cases, while we don't need to change our draft Drought Plan, we detail our response and explain how we can address the comment separately.

1 Summary

We encouraged a wide range of stakeholders to respond to our draft Drought Plan. Our Drought Plan sets out how we will manage our resources and supply system in dry years to maintain our service to customers.

In the consultation feedback there were some topics where stakeholders challenged us to do more or provide further evidence for our final Drought Plan. The key themes that emerged through the stakeholder feedback were:

- Drought permits/orders
- Drought trigger levels and associated actions
- Retailers and business customers
- Environmental appraisal improvements
- Stakeholder engagement and communication
- Monitoring & mitigation
- Ensuring the plan is tactical and operational

The revised draft drought plan submitted alongside this SoR has been updated to reflect the improvements recommended to us through the representation responses. Natural England (NE) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) had concerns with our SEA, HRA and WFD assessments, the details of which are contained in Section 2 of this SoR. Please note that we have only pulled out the summary representation comments received from NE in Section 2. Our final drought plan will be updated to take into consideration any updates to the SEA, HRA and WFD assessments. We are actively engaged with a recognised consultant to develop a programme of work to ensure we can address the points raised and meet the final drought plan deadline and we will share this with the Environment Agency and Natural England. We provide more information specifically about the Wyelands Drought Order in Section 3.

We would like to acknowledge that the Environment Agency (EA) provided three representation documents: their main representation, a minor issues document, and additional area EA comments. Section 2 contains their main representation details only. We have addressed the issues raised in the other two documents but have not specifically detailed the information in this SoR. We will be sending information on how we have addressed the issues in the additional area EA comments separately to this document.

Within our draft drought plan, and the accompanying environmental reports, we detail information relating to the Environmental Assessment Reports (EARs) that accompany each of the drought permit/orders. We believe that a number of concerns raised in some of the representations are alleviated through the information contained in the EARs. Where this is the case we have detailed this in section 2. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that our EARs are available on request.

As our plan is tactical and operational, it is not its intention to be a mechanism for investment to deliver natural capital net gain, biodiversity improvements, or historic environment improvements. Our Water Resources Management Plan and Business Plan are our business mechanisms for delivering these improvements. We do have drought actions with mitigation in place for actions which if initiated would require liaison with environmental regulators to ensure no deterioration to the environment. It should be noted mitigation measures correspond to the action taken opposed to remedy the drought itself.

2 Representations and subsequent actions taken

The representations received from the eight organisations that responded to our draft drought plan consultation are detailed below. We have detailed the action that we have taken / our response relating to each of the representations.

2 Severn Trent Water 2022 draft drought plan statement of response		
Organisation	Comment	Our Response
CRT	<p><i>Page 57 section 3.3.4.6 Site G: In a drought, the maximum daily abstraction at Site G reduces during the maximum regulation of the River Severn and during the first 100 days of regulation. STW would expect to apply for a drought permit/order if their Site G abstraction is reduced if there is a requirement to support their Elan Valley reservoirs. The proposed drought permit / order would suspend:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Daily abstraction restriction under maximum regulation.</i> <i>Constraints limiting abstraction over the first 100 days of river regulation.</i> <i>Joint licence constraints at Site G and the shared South Staffordshire asset.</i> <p><i>If the Drought Order is applied for, the Trust would expect the Environment Agency and STW to notify us of any proposed changes. The Trust can confirm we would take a very active role in the River Severn Drought Management Group as a key stakeholder during such an event, to ensure the impact of drought restrictions is carefully managed and minimised where possible.</i></p>	<p>At Severn Trent we are committed to liaising with stakeholders during times of drought.</p> <p>The Canal and River Trust (CRT) is a key stakeholder for the site G Drought Order mentioned in the representation. We would consult with the CRT in conjunction with the Environment Agency to ensure that any drought measures in place, and the associated impacts, are carefully considered and transparent to CRT. Sections 3.3.4.6 and 5.1 of the revised draft plan have been updated to reflect this commitment.</p>
CCW	<p><i>SVT has produced a substantial Plan which is necessarily full of technical detail covering the many facets of a drought, from its development to the realisation of a serious drought situation and learning lessons post event.</i></p>	<p>We are pleased that CCW acknowledge that our draft plan contains the necessary technical detail from pre-drought through to post-drought.</p>
CCW	<p><i>The Plan is sensibly structured and clearly set out. While it is easy to follow, because of the technical nature of much of the information provided and its length, the non-technical summary is essential for accessibility to customers, some stakeholders and wider interested parties. We are therefore pleased to see SVT has produced a non-technical summary but we found it to be more a summary of the main document, using the same language and diagrams. It also tends to refer to what is in the main plan, rather than provide a clear, concise, customer friendly non-technical summary of the plan. We suggest that</i></p>	<p>Our Drought Plan is aimed to be accessible across all stakeholder groups. We are happy to liaise with CCW to ensure the format and expression of our non-technical summary is clear, concise and customer friendly. The final Severn Trent Drought Plan 2022 non-technical summary will be more focused; summarising the plan regarding key topics, strategy and incident management. We thank CCW for the offer of working with us on a future version of the non-technical summary and will work with CCW before the submission of our final plan and final non-technical summary.</p>

	<i>SVT take are-look at this document and we would be happy to see and comment on a future version.</i>	
CCW	<i>The draft plan informs on the customer research undertaken, not only for PR19 but also following the May 2020 dry hot weather event that had a big impact on demand. The plan considers and takes account of customer's views arising from this research.</i>	We are pleased that CCW acknowledge that our draft plan has been informed by customer research.
CCW	<i>The plan also identifies the lessons learned from previous drought incidents, including the most recent 2018 and 2020 dry weather events and made changes accordingly. This is essential and we want to see the company continue with this process seeing this as an agile plan which adapts with learning.</i>	Learning lessons from previous drought incidents is essential to understand how we can maintain our service to our customers in future events. We are committed to continue with this process and adapt our responses accordingly based on new information.
CCW	<i>With regard to section 3 'Drought Actions', we acknowledge that over recent years SVT have made significant strides in reducing leakage. However, to encourage positive actions and restraint from customers, SVT need to demonstrate that as a company they are doing all they can through leakage management. This could be emphasised more clearly in both proposed actions and the communication plans in section 5, making it clear the additional focus that will be given to reducing leakage further during periods of drought.</i>	Reducing leakage is a priority for us so it is good to see that CCW acknowledge the significant strides we have made. Our longer term targets show that we want to continue and push forward with this progress. We agree that more emphasis should be placed on leakage management in the drought plan and have therefore updated sections 3.1.2 and section 5 (table 22) to emphasise this demand-side drought action.
CCW	<i>We also note from Section 3 that SVT have 'consulted with Retailers to get an understanding of their water efficiency plans' and 'undertaken research to assess Retailer appetite for partnership working on water efficiency'. We are concerned that business customers may not be getting the advice and guidance they need to help them become more water efficient in normal times, which becomes ever more essential during drought periods. We believe it is imperative that SVT and other water companies work closely with Retailers to ensure this happens. It would not be right for household customers to reduce consumption and some industrial users to remain profligate in their water use. We would like to see evidence in the communications plan in section 5 how SVT plan to increase communications with Retailers and non-household users of water during periods of drought.</i>	Following the Environment Agency's representation we have removed parts of Section 3 where the information is provided in other Severn Trent published documents. This helps to make the plan more tactical. With this in mind the statements that CCW refer to in Section 3 have been removed from the plan. We have included more information in Section 5.1.4 around the work we do with retailers and non-household customers, and what we would do in a drought situation.
CCW	<i>We consider that the company has been clear in how it will communicate with customers as a drought situation worsens and as restrictions may become necessary. The strategy uses a range of communication channels and includes non-household customers,</i>	Having clear communication with customers during all stages of a drought is necessary and we are pleased that CCW consider there is clarity on this. We have not made any changes to the drought plan based on this representation however we will look at BAU

	<i>regulators and wider partners as well as household customers. While the company will build on its business as usual (BAU) education of customers in water use, it may want to consider if any of its additional planned actions could be incorporated now as part of this BAU engagement, given the changing environmental challenges evidencing climate change. Also, as mentioned above, SVT may wish to include in those messages what they are doing, particularly with regard to extra efforts to reduce leakage.</i>	engagement and consider if additional planned actions could be incorporated now as part of BAU engagement. As detailed above, we have also updated Section 5 with more information relating to enhanced leakage management.
CCW	<i>An area of concern with the Communications Plan is what appears to be a limited focus on those people who are in vulnerable or potentially vulnerable circumstances and are on or should be on the PSR. We suggest SVT consider how they will escalate communication with those on the PSR and encouraging those who meet the qualifying criteria to join. This should include, if necessary, personal contact.</i>	Our multiple channels of communication mean that we are confident in our ability to reach customers who are vulnerable or in potentially vulnerable circumstances with effective water efficiency messaging during all stages of a drought. We have highlighted in Section 3.1. that we are active in encouraging eligible customers to sign up to our PSR, but we believe our detailed communications plan will be effective in promoting drought messaging to all our customers
EA	<i>Recommendation 1 – improve the clarity on the sequencing and timing of drought triggers and actions (linked to Directions 3 (c))</i>	We have amended our plan to ensure the trigger levels, their associated actions and the timing and sequencing of actions are clear and consistent. The annotated trigger level graphs in Section 3.4 and Appendix B have been updated to include information around timing and sequencing. Information around when a proposed drought permit would be used has also been included in these updated graphics. It was agreed verbally with the EA that we would not include a theoretical worst-case scenario graphic, but we have detailed in the text in Section 3.4. information around this scenario.
EA	<i>Recommendation 2 – update environmental assessments and clarify monitoring and mitigation for drought permits and orders</i>	<p>With regards to the SEA, HRA and WFD assessments we recognise the need for additional detail. In line with our statement in Section 1, and due to the concerns from other stakeholders in their representations, these assessments will be updated in time for final drought plan publication.</p> <p>We will work with the EA to complete the Environmental Assessments for our drought permit sites before the final plan is published, specifically for the Churnet, Derwent, and Dove permit options. We will consider assessments for the drought emergency sources listed in the plan and ensure our permit proposal details are correct and consistent. More detail will also be provided, where appropriate, relating to geomorphology, assessment of groundwater options and the in-combination impacts of groundwater supply options,</p>

		<p>plant species, SEA best practice, the boundaries of the SEA report, and monitoring and mitigation proposals,</p> <p>The work programme for the Avon and Leam Environmental Assessment Report has been provided to the EA separately.</p>
EA	<i>Recommendation 3 – improve the clarity of non-reservoir drought triggers</i>	<p>We have updated Section 2.2 of the plan to improve the clarity by explicitly linking the WRZs without a drought trigger graphs to their predominant source of supply, and by detailing that the flow and groundwater triggers we used are dictated to us by the EA's Water Situation Reports.</p> <p>We have applied a new technique for using groundwater trigger levels in 6 of our groundwater only water resource zones (WRZ). We have included information relating to this in Section 2.2. Forest & Stroud and Wolverhampton WRZs are conjunctive use zones and work continues on the best way to use trigger levels for these WRZs.</p>
EA	<i>Recommendation 4 - clarify permission for supply side actions</i>	<p>The plan has been updated to reflect that Beechtree Lane would need to be a drought permit, however we have kept the action in the 'extreme drought measures' section. This reflects the low likelihood of use. A light touch environmental assessment would be required, as confirmed with the EA.</p> <p>Section 3.3.4.5 has been updated to state that we would apply for a Drought Order on the River Churnet as opposed to either a Drought Order or Permit.</p> <p>An update to Section 5.2.2.1 has also been carried out to remove some information relating to the River Severn licence transfer we undertook in 2018. It is our intention not to have to initiate this particular licence transfer again, however this is subject to other ongoing River Severn abstraction licence activities, and the particular drought circumstances we may find ourselves in</p>
EA	<i>Recommendation 5 - ensure drought permit and orders are 'application ready'</i>	<p>Ensuring that drought permits and orders are 'application ready' reduces the risk that we are not granted a permit or order in a timely manner. We have added a graphic and a table within Section 3.3 of the drought plan to demonstrate we are 'application ready' and the process for applying for a permit along with the associated regulatory timescales</p>

		for determining any application. The clear steps shown in the process ensure they can be followed as an operational manual.
EA	<i>Recommendation 6 - clarify operation of bulk supply agreements in drought</i>	We would like to make it clear that neither Severn Trent or Yorkshire Water Services breached the Derwent Valley agreement in 2018 or 2020. At all times both companies complied with their contractual conditions. It is not necessary to address the comments raised in this representation as neither organisation breached the Derwent Valley agreement, which has been confirmed during post-publication consultation with the Environment Agency.
EA	<i>Improvement 1 - demonstrate resilience to short term heatwaves/high demand/outage</i>	There may be instances where parts of the Severn Trent region experience short term heatwaves and higher demand, or outages at some of our assets. These instances can happen outside of a drought year, or coincide/be a result of a recognised drought. In these cases we have a short term incident management process that is led by our tactical network control team. We have internal scenario documents for each of our control groups, which also include the incident response options that will be needed for each scenario, e.g. rezoning part of our network, tankering etc. If these scenarios coincide in a drought period some of our drought management actions may also be considered. We have updated the drought plan to include this information and examples are given in the lessons learnt (section 5.2) for 2018 and 2020 where we experienced hot weather incidents and higher demand. In section 5.1.5 of the plan we outline the targeted agile communications that we may use during these periods to speak to customers.
EA	<i>Improvement 2 - clarify supply action timescales and sequencing</i>	<p>Our emergency sources and extreme drought actions are intended to be utilised as droughts worsen. We have included some more narrative in section 3.2.1.1 on the revised draft plan to add clarity around the timing and sequencing of these actions. Section 3.4.1 contains relevant information too.</p> <p>We note that Blackbrook reservoir is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and have added this acknowledgement in to the plan however our timescales for implementation</p>

		<p>of this emergency source have not been amended due to the long lead in time already detailed in the plan.</p> <p>To provide further clarity we have updated table 32 to reflect the requirement for a water quality impact assessment.</p>
EA	<i>Improvement 3 - clarify and add detail to communications plan</i>	<p>Effective communication with stakeholders and customers during all stages of drought is key to ensure a drought is managed successfully. We are committed to working proactively with South Staffordshire Water via the River Severn Drought Management Group. We have updated our plan to reflect this commitment. Furthermore we have included additional information in Section 3.3.4.6 regarding the engagement we will have with the EA relating to the River Severn Drought Order or before we seek our own drought permit/order.</p> <p>Our comms plan has been updated to include further information relating to household, non-household and vulnerable customers.</p> <p>We have not added a worked example of Clywedog reservoir as Clywedog is not our asset and we do not tactically manage it as per the other reservoirs with drought curves included in the plan. Nevertheless, we are mindful of the wider water resources situation on the River Severn including Clywedog, River Severn regulation and the impacts on the River Severn Drought Order.</p>
EA	<i>Improvement 4 - clarify actions taken at end of drought and after review of the drought plan</i>	<p>Section 7 of our drought plan has been updated to provide further information around the actions we will take at the end of a drought and with what we will do following a drought event review.</p>
EA	<i>Improvement 5 - ensure plan is tactical and operational</i>	<p>Making sure our plan is tactical and operational is important to us so that it is easier for people to understand what we will do in a drought. We have removed information that can be found in our WMRP to make the drought plan easier to understand.</p> <p>Our drought trigger zones have been renamed as trigger levels in line with the EA's drought action categorisation to improve clarity.</p>

Erewash Borough Council	<i>Thank you for consulting Planning Policy Erewash Borough Council on your draft Drought Plan, non-technical summary and Strategic Environmental Assessment. I can confirm that we presently have no comments to add.</i>	We are pleased that Erewash Borough Council reviewed our draft Drought Plan, non-technical summary and SEA, and acknowledge they had no comments to make at this time.
Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership	<p><i>We support proposals within the Drought Plan which seek to improve water efficiency and consider that this aligns with the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan's aims to make effective use of sustainable sourced resources, including water, and minimising water use both as part of the construction process and within new development. We consider that these measures will assist in reducing the impact of future droughts. We are currently reviewing planning policies to ensure that these measures can be carried forward within the Strategic Plan.</i></p> <p><i>We look forward to further engagement with STW as part of developing the Strategic Plan, particularly in the production of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, to ensure that the infrastructure needs of new development can be met.</i></p>	We acknowledge the importance of working collaboratively with the Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership, and look forward to our further engagement on the development of their Strategic Plan. No changes to our draft Drought Plan have been made based on this representation.
HE	<i>We are particularly concerned that potential impacts on the historic environment are not mentioned at all within the Drought Plan itself and are largely dismissed in accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment.</i>	Our intention is to keep the drought plan as a tactical operational document but we will look to update our SEA with further information on the historic environment in time for final drought plan publication
HE	<p><i>Historic England advises Severn Trent Water to consider the following to inform an appropriate and positive response to the conservation and enhancement of historic environment:</i></p> <p><i>1. The vulnerability of some heritage assets (designated and non-designated) to drought, and the potential harm to, or loss of, significance as a result of changes to water catchment areas and it is particularly important to recognise that given the large geographical</i></p>	<p>We have fully comprehensive Environmental Assessment Reports (EAR) relating to our potential drought permit/order sites. These consider the impacts of our proposed permits/orders on the environment including the historic environment. We believe that we have sufficiently considered the points raised by Historic England through our EAR process. All of our current EARs are available on request.</p> <p>Specifically on point 6, our drought plan is a tactical operational document that details how we will maintain public water supply during periods of drought. It is not intended to act as driver for enhancing heritage assets or other variables. We understand the need for activities not to cause deterioration or harm and our EARs, as well as our associated</p>

	<p><i>coverage of the DPP, there is the potential for unknown heritage assets to be encountered;</i></p> <p><i>2. The potential impact of water catchment and abstraction measures on heritage assets and their settings, including impacts on water-related or water dependent heritage assets;</i></p> <p><i>3. The potential impact of changes in groundwater flows and chemistry on preserved organic and palaeoenvironmental remains: where ground water levels are lowered, this may result in the possible degradation of remains through de-watering;</i></p> <p><i>4. The potential impact of hydro-morphological adaptations on heritage assets: this can include the modification/removal of historic in-channel structures, such as weirs; as well as physical changes to rivers, with the potential to impact on archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains;</i></p> <p><i>5. The potential for unrecorded deeply buried and waterlogged archaeology within the 'natural' floodplain;</i></p> <p><i>6. The opportunities for conserving and enhancing heritage assets as part of an integrated approach water management, this includes sustaining and enhancing the local character and distinctiveness of historic townscapes and landscapes.</i></p>	<p>Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment, and Water Framework Directive detail our consideration of this.</p>
HE	<p><i>Historic England would like to stress that under the NPPF plans should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence (paragraph 31). We therefore recommend the collection and assessment of specific baseline information by Severn Trent Water which could include identifying the potential for buried, waterlogged archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains of significant interest and fragility that can be associated with river valleys, floodplains, estuaries, coastal and</i></p>	<p>We recognise that plans should be underpinned by relevant and up to date information. As part of the work carried out for our Environmental Assessment Reports, which we regularly and routinely update according to regulatory timescales, we have considered the impact of our plan on archaeology.</p> <p>It is worthwhile highlighting the temporary nature of the actions contained within our drought plan.</p>

	<p>wetland areas, including mires, bogs, peatland and water meadows. In particular this exercise should take account of areas of archaeological importance and the potential for unrecorded archaeology and seek to establish the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the significance of the archaeological remains • its condition, the burial environment and state of preservation and • the likely impact of development activity (e.g. potential removal or dewatering from the proposed scheme) on that significance and state of preservation. In such environments archaeological remains that constitute baseline information can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deeply buried archaeological remains, which means that they are unlikely to be identified by standard approaches • waterlogged archaeological remains, which would mean they are likely to be rare and potentially important, but might require greater resources to excavate and subsequently deal with, or • indirectly impacted archaeological remains: currently well-preserved known and unrecorded, designated and non-designated buried archaeology in the vicinity which may be adversely affected by changes to the water environment. 	<p>It is not our intention to undertake a programme of monitoring to establish the information contained in this representation.</p>
HE	<p>Waterlogged archaeology may be nationally important if it is well preserved, rare, of exceptional significance and evidence exists for it to be understood in terms of its contemporary landscape context.</p>	<p>Severn Trent recognise this but we have made no changes to our drought plan based on this statement</p>
HE	<p>Where nationally important archaeology owes its significance to waterlogging and is in proximity to the scheme, changes in the water</p>	<p>We agree that changes in the water environment should be avoided that may cause harm. Our Environmental Assessment Reports associated with our drought permit/order sites consider nationally important archaeology.</p>

	<i>environment should be avoided that may be cause harm in order to conserve its significance.</i>	
HE	<i>Although it may be appropriate for this evidence gathering and assessment to take place at the more detailed design/application stage, it is important to raise these issues and signpost how they might (further down the line) be tackled as the consideration of waterlogged archaeology may be costly to deal with and deep floodplain deposits difficult to evaluate by standard techniques.</i>	Please refer to our Environmental Assessment Reports regarding this. We do want to highlight the comparatively small scale, in % terms, that our temporary actions would have on river flows and groundwater levels.
HE	<i>The approaches required are likely to include deposit modelling and assessing the probable condition and state of preservation of any buried archaeology. As these are not techniques regularly used in all desk-based assessments, the need for them to inform the design stages of water-related proposals should be appreciated early on. This will help to reduce the risks for the development as well as maximising archaeological understanding and consistency with national planning policy for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.</i>	We understand that deposit modelling and assessing the condition and state of preservation of buried archaeology is important. However, based on the outputs of our Environmental Assessment Reports, and as mentioned above the relative small scale change our temporary actions would have, we do not think it is appropriate for Severn Trent to undertake these actions.
HE	<i>The strategy/plan should identify the need for a deposit model, based on existing borehole and other information, as well as a preliminary assessment of the likely state of preservation of any buried archaeological remains, based on previous archaeological work in the locality.</i>	Please refer to our response to the representation above.
HE	<i>Please note also that in order to take account of unrecorded and non-designated archaeology, the relevant Historic Environment Record should be referred to, and the views of local authority archaeological advisers sought</i>	Our Environmental Assessment Reports associated with each of our potential Drought Permit/Order sites take into consideration the potential impacts on archaeology.

HE	<p><i>Historic England notes that there is no mention within the document of the historic environment and therefore no consideration of the actions in the plan that would impact on cultural and heritage sites. Drought scenarios may well have impacts upon designated and non-designated heritage assets for the reasons outlined above, and actions to address drought may also have further implications for these assets.</i></p>	<p>The drought plan is written to be a tactical, operational document and so it would not be appropriate to include information on the historic environment within the main report. However, the accompanying Environmental Assessment Reports associated with our drought permit/order sites consider their potential impact on cultural and heritage sites.</p>
HE	<p><i>With regard to actions, it is noted that one of the supply side measures included in the DDP is that of drought permits and orders; although it is acknowledged that the DPP has been prepared so that Severn Trent Water will need to implement such measures as infrequently as possible.</i></p>	<p>We can confirm we would look to implement drought permits and orders as infrequently as possible. We do however want to take this opportunity to reiterate, as detailed in our plan, that they are a supply side action that we can look to implement in exceptional circumstances with regulator approval.</p>
HE	<p><i>Several locations are identified (para.3.3.4, p.52) where, in a drought, Severn Trent Water may have to apply for drought permits or orders. These locations include Ambergate on the River Derwent, where we note that the Drought Plan will be able to authorise the abstraction of up to 320MI/d, when the flow falls to not less than 500MI/d, rather than the 680MI/D current flow threshold. We further note that under 'normal' conditions the abstraction licences in place mean that STW can abstract up to 62,100MI annually from the River Derwent at Ambergate, which equates to 170MI/d.</i></p> <p><i>The Ambergate Drought Permit therefore allows a significant increase in water abstraction at this location and we note that the DDP concludes that the predicted flow change arising from the Ambergate drought permit would only affect the lower river, with the impacts on the environment and on other water users all found to be insignificant. However, given Ambergate's location within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, Historic England consider that the impacts of this measure on the historic environment should be fully explored in the DPP, and not simply left to the SEA</i></p>	<p>We would like to thank Historic England for the detailed consideration of our Ambergate on the River Derwent potential drought permit site. We can confirm that we have considered and explored the potential impacts of the operation of this permit on the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site within the associated Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) that accompanies the drought permit. The EAR forms an integral part of being 'application ready' and as such the historic environment is considered in it. We are happy to share a copy of this EAR with Historic England should they wish to see it. We believe the EARs provide a sufficient level of detail.</p>

	<i>Report's assessment. To assist we refer you to Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Management Plan 2020-2025 and particularly to Objective 1.10: 'Ensure appropriate protection of the significant water management systems in the Derwent Valley', which are central to the outstanding universal value of this World Heritage Site. This can be accessed here: http://www.derwentvalleymills.org/about-the-derwent-valley-mills/the-managementplan/</i>	
HE	<i>In addition, there may be implications for the historic environment from Drought Permits which may be applied for at reservoirs in the Derwent Valley, Brownsover on the River Avon, Eathorpe on the River Leam, Tittesworth Reservoir and the River Churnet, Wyelands on the River Wye, Site G on the River Severn and on the River Dove. It is Historic England's view that this issue is not sufficiently explored in the Draft Drought Plan.</i>	The Environmental Assessment Reports that accompany each of our potential drought permit/order sites contain information pertaining to their impacts on the historic environment. We believe the EARs provide a sufficient level of detail.
HE	<i>You will be aware that Historic England previously commented on the SEA Scoping Report for the Draft Drought Plan. Whilst we welcome the inclusion of 'Archaeology and cultural heritage' as a SEA topic and the objectives identified within this topic, we reiterate our comments that the historic environment should be brought into other SEA topic areas and objectives, such as the 'Water' and 'Soil' topic areas.</i>	We acknowledge and thank Historic England for commenting on our SEA scoping report for the Draft Drought Plan. We will be updating our SEA in time for the final Drought Plan publication in early 2022 and will look to bring the historic environment into other SEA topic area and objectives.
HE	<i>We welcome the acknowledgement that, in some instances, there are adverse effects on water-dependent cultural heritage assets and landscapes characterised by watercourses (p.v Non-Technical Summary) and this is borne out in the 'Commentary' included in the 'Visual evaluation matrix summary for demand-side measures' at Figure 5.1 of the main SEA Report</i>	We are pleased that Historic England welcome this acknowledgement.

HE	<p><i>However, Historic England raise concerns with the assessment findings, together with inconsistencies in the SEA Report, in relation to supply-side measures. Particularly, it is noted that the SEA determines that the drought permits/orders associated with the operation of the Ambergate on River Derwent would reduce water levels and flows in the river such that there may be “moderate adverse effects” on the setting of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (p.vi Non-Technical Summary). This is at variance with the ‘Commentary’ on the Ambergate Drought Permit & Order, contained in Figure 5.2, which concludes that “negligible adverse effects” have been determined, due to the River Derwent “not being central to the amenity use of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site”.</i></p>	<p>We thank Historic England for pointing out this inconsistency. Our SEA report will be updated in time for the publication of our final drought plan and so we will rectify this inconsistency during that update.</p>
HE	<p><i>Historic England considers that the conclusion of the potential for moderate adverse effects is a more likely scenario, due to the river and the Derwent Valley being key to the development of the water-powered cotton mills in this location and the industrial landscape of high historical and technological significance; leading to its designation as a World Heritage Site. Again we refer you to the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Management Plan 2020-2025.</i></p>	<p>An assessment of potential affects on the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site has been undertaken as part of the Amenity and Leisure assessment within our site specific Environmental Assessment Report. It has been concluded that any hydraulic change associated with the Derwent Valley drought permit relative to a baseline drought scenario would have no effect on the integrity or practical conservation of the World Heritage Site. We will ensure that our SEA is updated to reflect this as per the representation response above.</p>
HE	<p><i>Furthermore, we note that all of the other locations where Drought Permits or Orders may be brought into use have also been found to have “negligible” effects on archaeology and the cultural environment, and that there is therefore no distinction of impacts in the SEA between these and a Drought Permit/Order which may adversely affect a World Heritage Site. Indeed, the assessment of “negligible” effects in relation to heritage is not based on any information that Severn Trent Water has shared with Historic England, or that we have access to. Historic England therefore raises significant concerns over</i></p>	<p>The Environmental Assessment Reports that accompany each of the potential drought permit/order sites contains extensive information relating to the impacts of the operation of these actions on the environment, including the historic environment. We have not updated our drought plan based on this representation due to the information being available in our EARs which we would be happy to share with Historic England should they wish to see them.</p>

	<i>the apparent lack of evidence to support the Draft Drought Plan. We therefore suggest that the SEA and the Plan itself is revisited to carefully reflect the implications for the historic environment, which we consider have not been sufficiently taken into account.</i>	
HE	<i>Finally, we would like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you in this consultation. To avoid any doubt, this does not affect our obligation to provide further advice and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise where we consider that these would have an adverse effect upon the historic environment.</i>	We would like to confirm that this representation does not preclude Historic England from providing further advice or potentially objecting to specific proposals.
NE	<p><i>The dDP has been partially considered under the Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 Regulations as amended, known as a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).</i></p> <p><i>A full HRA Stage 1 screening has been undertaken for the drought plan. However, there is insufficient information to conclude that the dDP options will maintain the coherence of the Natura 2000 series and therefore we consider the conclusions of the HRA and therefore the current dDP unsound in its current form</i></p>	<p>We acknowledge that NE have considered the draft drought plan under the Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 Regulations as amended, known as a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).</p> <p>We do not agree that the draft drought plan is unsound as it does provide the necessary information to meet the requirements of the Drought Plan Direction 2020. We do acknowledge that more information can be included within the HRA and other accompanying documentation, however these will be updated, where necessary, in time for final drought plan submission.</p>
NE	<i>HRA screening for all other supply-side measures failed to identify all potential Likely Significant Effects (LSE) and Natural England advises that, for example, a full HRA including Appropriate Assessment (AA) is undertaken to assess cumulative impacts on the Severn Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar.</i>	We will review our HRA screening, in time for final drought plan publication, to assess whether we believe all potential Likely Significant Effects (LSE) have been identified. We will consider whether a full HRA including Appropriate Assessment is required to assess cumulative impacts on the Severn Estuary. The detail, and subsequent decision, contained in section 3 of this SoR regarding the Wylands drought order is relevant to the scope of this potential assessment.
NE	<i>As screening does not identify all the significant effects on Habitats sites that do not have appropriate assessments not all identified</i>	Reviewing our HRA screening as per the above response will identify if we believe there are other adverse effects that should be mitigated against

	<i>adverse effects have been mitigated so as to be sufficiently certain to remove adverse effects on integrity.</i>	
NE	<i>Where mitigation is insufficient to remove all potential adverse effects on integrity with sufficient certainty. The tests of no alternatives and Imperative Reasons or Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) for identified adverse effects on integrity have not been presented. Compensatory habitat for identified adverse effects on integrity has not been secured. These deficiencies in the HRA must be rectified before the final plan.</i>	We are committed to reviewing our HRA before the final plan is published. This will include where necessary information on Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) for identified adverse effects on integrity and compensatory habitats.
NE	<i>An Appropriate Assessment (AA) was carried out for the Wyelands option. However Natural England do not believe the HRA was not carried out correctly and we do not agree with the conclusions made. Natural England are of the opinion that operation of this option as currently prescribed would result in an Adverse Effect on Integrity (AEIOI) of the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC).</i>	We acknowledge this comment. Please see Section 3 of this SoR regarding our plan for the Wyelands option.
NE	<i>The Appropriate Assessment carried out for the Wyelands option highlighted uncertainty in terms of both the potential impacts upon the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the suggested mitigation measures so as to prevent an AEIOI. Before the plan is finalised, all the options which have an adverse effect on integrity or the effect is uncertain, and which the Secretary of State decides meet the tests under section Regulation 64 of the Conservation (Habitats and Species) Regulations 2017 must have secured compensation under Regulation 68.</i>	We acknowledge this comment. Please see Section 3 of this SoR regarding our plan for the Wyelands option.
NE	<i>The HRA does not have sufficient regard to the conservation objectives and the supporting conservation advice and/or favourable condition tables that underpin them. Notably, (but not exclusively) in regards to the screening of in combination effects the Severn Estuary</i>	<p>We acknowledge this comment. We will review the HRA screening for in-combination effects.</p> <p>Please see Section 3 of this SoR regarding our plan for the Wyelands option, which will have implications for any in-combination effects on the Severn Estuary</p>

	<i>SAC/SPA/Ramsar site and appropriate assessment for the Wyelands option on the River Wye SAC.</i>	
NE	<i>No summary of your monitoring and assessment plan was included within the technical appendix of the dDP</i>	We will consider whether to add a summary of our monitoring and assessment plan as a technical appendix following the updates we are planning on making in time for final plan publication. Requests can be made by Natural England to view the updated EARs if necessary.
NE	<i>The plan contained no high-level summary of assessment results.</i>	We will consider whether to add a high-level summary of the updated assessment results before final plan publication. It may be we retain the information in the supporting documentation as opposed to adding it to the main drought plan document, but we will consider this further.
NE	<i>No clear site/feature sensitivity score or confidence rating in assessment were included within the plan. By including these in a transparent and direct way the relative impacts and uncertainties of options within the plan can be compared.</i>	We will consider adding site/feature sensitivity scores or confidence ratings following the updates made to our HRA, SEA and WFD assessments.
NE	<i>The dDP has been partially considered under the UK legislation by The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 SI No.1633 (Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process). The deficiencies in the SEA process are set out in Annex 1.</i>	Annex 1 of Natural England's representation is a comprehensive annex for which we thank them for their time and effort in preparing this. We will be considering each of the deficiencies presented in this Annex before final plan submission. We will engage with Natural England regarding the points raised.
NE	<i>The dDP has mostly selected options with the least/ lesser environmental impacts in preference to those with greater impacts – with the exception of triggering Temporary use bans and drought permits at trigger zone D. The deficiencies in the options selection are set out in Annex 1.</i>	We are pleased that Natural England recognise that our plan has mostly selected options with least/lesser environmental impacts. We believe including the triggering of Temporary Use Bans (TUBs) and drought permits in trigger zone D was an error in the draft plan, this has now been rectified in the revised draft plan. Please see Section 3.4.1. It is also worth noting that we have amended our drought trigger zones to be drought trigger levels in line with EA expectations. TUBs and drought permits are triggered in Level 2.

NE	<i>The dDP SEA contains options that potentially affect designated sites, protected landscapes and/or habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. These potential impacts on important environmental receptors have not been adequately assessed. These impacts upon important environmental receptors have not been mitigated. The details are set out in Annex 1.</i>	We will be considering each of the deficiencies presented in Annex 1 before final plan submission, including the potential impacts on important environmental receptors. We will engage with Natural England regarding the points raised.
NE	<i>The SEA has not undertaken a separate assessment of impacts on SSSI's or priority habitats, therefore it is not possible to determine whether the dDP has fully identified all the significant adverse effects on the environment including those on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and biodiversity. The dDP will not result in a net gain in biodiversity nor enhance the environmental resilience of landscapes and seas.</i>	During our SEA updates we will consider a separate assessment of impacts on SSSIs / priority habitats. As the intention of the drought plan is to be an operational tactical manual and is not intended to act as the mechanism to result in net gain in biodiversity of enhance environmental resilience. Nevertheless we will consider these in our updates.
NE	<i>The Natural capital of the dDP options has not been assessed. The dDP is not likely to result in enhanced natural capital.</i>	The intention of the drought plan is to be an operational tactical manual. As an organisation we recognise the importance of natural capital and enhancing natural capital where possible, however the drought plan is not the mechanism for enhancing this. Our WRMP and business plan are our main mechanisms for assessing and enhancing natural capital.
NE	<i>The identified deficiencies in the SEA should be addressed before the final plan is published.</i>	We acknowledge this and are committed to update our SEA based on all of the representations received before the final drought plan is published.
NRW	<i>It is our advice that there are significant deficiencies in the content of the HRA, as well as the EAR and supporting documentation in relation to the Wyelands Drought Order. Therefore, we do not agree with the conclusion of the HRA Appropriate Assessment that there will be no adverse effects on site integrity of the River Wye/Afon Gwy SAC.</i>	We acknowledge the improvements that NRW would like to see within our HRA, as well as our EAR and other supporting documentation, relating to the Wyelands Drought Order. Please see Section 3 of this document with further information relating to this site and the actions we intend to take.

NRW	<i>Before the final drought plan can be 'approved' or 'published', it is our advice that significant additional information is required before the HRA can be concluded.</i>	We acknowledge NRW's advice here. Please see Section 3 of this document regarding the actions we are taking relating to the Wyelands drought order for the final drought plan.
NRW	<i>We welcome Severn Trent's commitment to the HRA process. It is our advice that the evidence (based on the EAR) and the proposed mitigation measures in relation to Wyelands Drought Order is insufficient to rule out adverse effects on the integrity of the River Wye/ Afon Gwy SAC. It also appears that the HRA has only been assessed against the English conservation objectives for the River Wye SAC. The company must fully assess all of the relevant Welsh conservation objectives for parts of the River Wye within Wales (downstream of the Wyelands abstraction).</i>	We are pleased that NRW recognise our commitment to the HRA process. Please see Section 3 of this document regarding the actions we are taking relating to the Wyelands drought order for the final drought plan.
NRW	<i>Following on from the above, we advise that the sections of the appropriate assessment that relate to the Wyelands Drought Order are not sufficiently evidenced and mitigated to support the conclusion of no adverse effects; therefore, not all potential adverse effects or uncertainties are sufficiently identified for the purposes of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The assessment 'cannot have lacunae and must contain complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions capable of removing all reasonable scientific doubt as to the effects [...] on the protected site'.</i>	Please refer to Section 3 of this document.
NRW	<i>Before the drought plan can be finalised, approved and published, Severn Trent must present sufficient evidence to rule out adverse effects on the integrity of National Site Network (NSN) sites. If it is not possible to rule this out, the derogations set out under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, and Regulations 64 and 68 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) must be met, namely the consideration of alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) and the securing of compensatory</i>	Please refer to Section 3 of this document

	<i>measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 network is protected.</i>	
NRW	<i>To address our concerns set out above, we advise that Severn Trent will need to update the EAR (dated 2017) and the HRA Appropriate Assessment (AA). These must provide sufficient evidence and mitigation measures to satisfy us that adverse effects on site integrity can be avoided. This would involve carrying out a programme of work (agreed with ourselves and Natural England). This must be completed before the final plan can be approved and published. Any new evidence could have further implications for the HRA conclusions.</i>	Please refer to Section 3 of this document
NRW	<p><i>If through discussions with ourselves and Natural England, it's not possible to agree and complete programme of works within practical timescales to approve and publish the final plan, Severn Trent should consider one of the following next steps:</i></p> <p><i>i) confirm that Severn Trent will not apply for, or implement the Wyelands drought order within the final plan. This means they must provide a clear commitment (an agreement) within the final plan that this drought order cannot be applied for and implemented until a sufficient evidence has been provided via a programme of work during AMP7, as outlined in point 5 above (to inform the next plan).</i></p> <p><i>ii) removal of the Wyelands Drought order option from the final plan</i></p> <p><i>iii) amend the drought order to avoid adverse effects on site integrity – note this will also have to be supported by an EAR and HRA AA</i></p> <p><i>In the absence of these, it is our advice that the requirements of the Habitats Directive and Habitats Regulations have not been met.</i></p>	Please refer to Section 3 of this document
NRW	<i>In relation to the SEA Environmental Report, given that we have advised that adverse effects on site integrity cannot be ruled out due to insufficient evidence, we are concerned that the SEA has assigned a</i>	Please refer to Section 3 of this document

	<i>negligible negative effect against the biodiversity, flora and fauna receptor. Our concern is the inclusion of negligible within the assessment appears to play down the significance of any potential impact given the data it is based upon is insufficient.</i>	
NRW	<i>The requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 need to be considered in an updated EAR and SEA. In Wales, 55 habitats and 557 species are identified under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, as of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales.</i>	Please refer to Section 3 of this document
NRW	<i>In addition, we have concerns with the WFD Regulations considerations within the EAR for Wales. We also advise that until our concerns regarding the WFD Regs and the HRA are addressed, the company has not met the Drought Plan Directions (England) 3e or 3g (linked to mitigation) with respect to Welsh aspects of River Wye/Afon Gwr SAC.</i>	Please refer to Section 3 of this document

3 Additional details regarding our Wyelands Drought Order

We recognise the need to understand the potential impacts that operating our Wyelands Drought Order may have on the River Wye/ Afon Gwy Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in more detail. However, before undertaking updates to our HRA Appropriate Assessment, as well as the EAR and other supporting documentation (SEA and WFD assessment), our intention is to evaluate in further detail whether we require this Drought Order in the future or not, and whether we would be able to ensure customer supply in a drought through alternative means. For the final drought plan we will confirm our position.

If the decision is made to retain the Wyelands Drought Order then we recognise the need to fully assess it against all of the relevant Welsh conservation objectives. We also acknowledge that we must present sufficient evidence to rule out adverse effects on the integrity of National Site Network (NSN) sites. If it is not possible to rule this out, we understand that the derogations set out under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, and Regulations 64 and 68 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) must be met, namely the consideration of alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) and the securing of compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 network is protected. We also recognise that the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 need to be considered in any updated EAR and SEA, and that the WFD Regulations need further assessment within any updated EAR.

It is our intention to engage with Natural Resources Wales and Natural England regarding their draft drought plan representations. We would like to make it clear that our revised draft plan continues to include information regarding our Wyelands Drought Order that was included in our original draft drought plan, but the final drought plan will be updated to reflect the decisions made based on the above information. It is our firm belief that through the decision made regarding the Wyelands Drought Order, which will be confirmed by the time of the final Drought Plan, we will have satisfied or have a programme of work lined up to satisfy the Drought Plan Directions (England) 3e and 3g with respect to Welsh aspects of the River Wye/Afon Gwr SAC.