

# What is a Water Resources Management Plan?

Since 2015 we have held nearly **30,000 customer** conversations. This has helped us understand more about what is important to our **customers** now and in the future. We have talked to our **customers** about how water plays a part in their lives and the dependencies we all have on water.

Our **customers** have clearly told us that their **number one priority is a reliable supply of clean, good quality, water**. They need to know that their water supply is secure, wholesome and sustainable. Our **customers** also want us to **stop failures** in service from affecting their lives. We need to ensure that our water supply system is **resilient**.

Our **Water Resources Management Plan** is one of the key components that will help us to provide **customers** with what they want from us. It describes how we will ensure that we continue to have **sufficient water** to supply our **customers**, in the face of **future challenges such as climate change, population growth and environmental pressures**. We update our Water Resources Management Plan every five years.

## What challenges do we face?

Yorkshire Water already has **one of the most resilient** water resource systems in the country. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, our **grid network** allows us to move water around Yorkshire to make sure that we have **enough water for everyone's needs**. Secondly, we take our water from a variety of different types of water supply; we use water from **reservoirs, rivers and groundwater sources**. Thirdly, we plan for **serious, long lasting droughts** that go well beyond any that we have experienced in the past.

Even with our **current high level of resilience**, we know that we cannot afford to be complacent at a time where the world around us is changing. With the **population of Yorkshire forecast to grow, uncertainty about our future climate**, and with our **customers rightly expecting more from us**, we need to continue to **evolve** our plans. We need to be **innovative and ambitious**, whilst at the same time recognising the importance of **security, resilience and affordability** when planning water resources.

In developing our plan, we have thought about how we impact on Yorkshire's environment, its economy and people as we carry out our activities. As well as talking to our **customers and stakeholders** to find out their priorities, we have worked with **experts** to provide us with the **latest understanding of the challenges** that we face.

## How have we created our Plan?

Our Water Resources Management Plan shows how we will **make sure that we continue to provide a secure supply of high quality water** in the short, medium and long term, projecting up to 40 years into the future.

To help us understand what the future demand for water may be, we have **updated our projections of population growth** in Yorkshire. We have also considered how we can help to **reduce the amount of water that gets used** both by **our own operations and our customers**. Our **customers** have clearly told us that they want us to **reduce how much water is wasted through leakage**, and in response to this we have set ourselves really **challenging targets** for leakage reduction.

On the supply side, we have worked closely with the Environment Agency to understand where **environmental pressures** may reduce the amount of water available to us in the future. We have also updated our assessment of the impact of our **changing climate** on water resources; customers have told us that they want to see clear plans for managing the challenges presented by climate change.

We have also considered how **water quality** may change in the future, and how we will need to invest in a range of solutions to ensure that we **continue to supply high quality water to our customers**. We will continue to work closely with land owners, land managers and the agriculture sector to enhance the **resilience of our raw water sources** – the water we take from the environment to treat and supply to you as safe, high quality drinking water – as the first stage in the journey of ensuring **water quality from its source to our customers' taps**.

Our customers are very concerned about **how much their water bill will be** now and into the future. We need to find ways of addressing the pressures we face in the future through a changing climate, population growth and environmental protection **without causing people to worry about paying their water bill**.

## What does our plan say?

Our forecasts indicate that there could be 6.4 million people living in Yorkshire by 2045; that is almost **a million more** than now. To support the growing population, we expect to see the construction of almost **600,000 new houses**. Our forecasts show that water used by industry will continue to decline steadily over the duration of the plan period.

The impact of **environmentally driven reductions** on what we can abstract for water supply is small in our current plan. However, this impact **could increase significantly** in the future.

**Climate change remains the biggest single factor** that affects our future supply of water. Revised estimates used for our latest plan show a **reduced effect compared to our previous plan**; however, climate change still presents a risk to our future supply demand balance. If we do not take any action to strengthen our supply demand balance, there is a risk climate change will reduce our available water supply to the point we could experience a deficit by the 2030s. However, we will need to continually update our understanding of the potential impact of climate change for future plans.

Our Water Resources Management Plan supports our intention to significantly **reduce leakage** between 2020 and 2025. When our customers see how we are performing in comparison with other companies they are disappointed to see that we are not a top performer and want us to at least be an average performer. Our plan also reflects our ambition to reduce leakage over the longer-term to achieve a 40% reduction before the projected risk of deficit and to continue reducing leakage to the end of the planning period.

Through delivering increased leakage reduction **we do not expect that our customers will need more water** than we can supply during the 25-year planning period. **Increased demand management activity**, where we work with customers and stakeholders to use less water, including **challenging leakage reduction targets**, also help to contribute to this.

We believe that our Water Resources Management Plan will help us to ensure that **customers continue to get what they prioritise highest – a resilient and sustainable supply of clean water**. The plan also shows that we can maintain our current high levels of water resources resilience into the future, helping to ensure that bills remain affordable. Other activities that our customers consider to be important – such as reducing leakage – will help to contribute to our sustained resilience.