



Cambridge Water

90 Fulbourn Road, Cambridge, CB1 9JN
www.cambridge-water.co.uk
Tel: 01223 706050

5 April 2023

By email: michael.goodhart@hotmail.com

Dear Michael

Thank you for your letter to Andy Willicott dated 27 March 2023 about Cam Valley Forum's call for Cambridge Water to impose a temporary use ban (TUB) from 1 July 2023. Mr Willicott has asked me to respond on his behalf.

In your letter, you raised a number of points about a temporary use ban. I have addressed each of these in turn below.

1. To clarify, our current drought triggers allow us to prepare so that when the trigger to implement a TUB – a recharge deficit of 180mm – is expected to be reached, we would be able to implement a ban in accordance with our drought plan.
2. We are required to use the Environment Agency's guidance on producing drought plans to set drought trigger levels. For example, trigger level 1 is about providing increased customer communications on the need to save water; a TUB can be implemented when we reach level 2. This enables consistent understanding across water companies for what the drought level status means. Implementing a TUB before we reach level 2 would require us to change the triggers associated with each drought level. This would have the effect of changing our published levels of service, requiring us to prepare a new drought plan. As we have discussed previously, we are planning to carry out a review of our drought triggers over the next 12 months. This may lead to a change in our levels of service for when a TUB is implemented, but that will be determined as part of the process.
3. The maximum recharge deficit that we have calculated in our drought planning tool was 49.2mm. The deficit is measured against long-term average recharge (effective precipitation), using Met Office data. This deficit was cumulative from November 2021. As at March 2023, groundwater and river flows in the Cambridge Water region are at normal levels.
4. In a typical year, we abstract 73% of the volume on our available abstraction licences as granted by the Environment Agency. This increased to 75% in 2022 because of customer demand. You will be aware that these licences are currently under review to ensure our abstractions are sustainable.

Finally, in your letter you say that you would like to use our response to inform an article for the Cambridge Independent and other associated press releases that highlight the need to conserve water. We welcome the need to encourage all consumers to use water wisely. If possible we would like to work collaboratively with you in your engagement with Cambridge Independent and the wider press.

Please let me know if you have any further questions, or if there is anything you would like to discuss.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Cooper
Strategy and Regulation Director

A member of South Staffordshire Plc.