

Runway East
1 Victoria Street
Bristol
BS1 6AA

www.albionwater.co.uk

Notice regarding Albion Water Drought Plan 2027

- Please note that Albion Water has not had cause to remove or redact any commercially confidential or Nationally sensitive information from this Drought Plan.
- Our 11-week public consultation is open until **4 August 2026**.
- We welcome any general comments on the draft plan. General feedback should be sent by email to both:
 - RegulatoryReturns@Albionwater.co.uk
 - water.resources@defra.gov.uk

Please use the subject line: “**Albion Waters’ draft Drought Plan consultation**”.

Alternatively, written feedback may be sent by post to:

Drought Plan Consultation

Defra

Drought

Seacole, 2 Marsham Street

London SW1P 4DF

Following the consultation period, we will carefully review all feedback received. We will then publish a Statement of Response, setting out any changes we have made to our draft Drought Plan, by 23 October 2026.

The Secretary of State will subsequently consider whether any directions should be issued before the Plan is finalised. We expect to publish our final Drought Plan in early 2027.

Albion Water

Drought Plan 2027

For NAV Areas:
Upper Rissington (Thames Water) &
Five Oaks – Chigwell (Essex & Suffolk Water)

1. Introduction

Albion Water operates as a New Appointee and Variation (NAV) water company, providing water supply services within specific inset areas. As a NAV undertaker, Albion Water does not own or operate raw water sources, abstraction licences, or water treatment works. All potable water supplied to Albion Water's networks is provided through bulk supply agreements with incumbent water undertakers.

For the supply areas covered by this plan, water is provided by the relevant incumbent undertakers through metered bulk supply points into Albion Water's distribution network. Albion Water is therefore responsible for the operation and maintenance of the local distribution infrastructure, including service reservoirs, distribution mains, and customer connections within the inset areas.

As Albion Water does not directly manage water resource assets, the management of drought impacts on raw water resources, abstraction controls, and treatment processes remains the responsibility of the relevant incumbent undertakers. Consequently, Albion Water's drought planning and response focuses on:

- **Coordination with incumbent undertakers' drought plans and operational decisions**
- **Monitoring and managing demand within Albion Water's distribution networks**
- **Implementation of demand reduction measures where required**
- **Customer communication and engagement during drought conditions**
- **Protection of vulnerable customers through the Priority Services Register**
- **Operational management of distribution assets to maintain supply resilience**

Where drought measures are implemented by bulk suppliers, Albion Water will align its operational response and customer communications with the actions taken by those undertakers to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach for customers within NAV supply areas.

Through this approach, Albion Water ensures that customers supplied within its inset areas are managed in a manner consistent with the drought management strategies of the incumbent water companies while maintaining regulatory compliance and supporting efficient water use.

2. Background & Inset Profiles

Upper Rissington (approximately 2,500 residents) receives potable water through a bulk supply agreement with Thames Water, which is delivered into Albion Water's local distribution network. The network includes operational service reservoir storage that provides approximately 24 hours of distribution buffer capacity to support network management and short-term supply resilience.

Five Oaks – Chigwell (approximately 800 residents) receives potable water through a bulk supply agreement with Essex & Suffolk Water, which feeds into Albion Water's distribution network. The local network includes operational service reservoir storage providing approximately 18 hours of distribution buffer capacity.

Albion Water does not operate raw water abstraction or treatment assets within these supply areas. Water resource management and drought management of raw water sources remain

the responsibility of the relevant incumbent water undertakers. As a result, both areas are fully dependent on bulk water supplies from the incumbent companies, and Albion Water's drought response focuses on distribution network management, demand reduction, and effective customer communications.

3. Objectives

The objectives of Albion Water's Drought Plan are to ensure that water supplies within its NAV supply areas remain resilient during periods of drought while supporting the drought management actions of the relevant bulk supply undertakers.

As Albion Water operates as a New Appointee and Variation (NAV) company and relies on bulk potable water supplied by incumbent water companies, the focus of this plan is on distribution network management, demand reduction, and customer communication rather than the management of raw water resources or treatment assets.

The key objectives of this plan are to:

- **Maintain continuity of water supply within Albion Water's distribution networks during drought conditions wherever reasonably practicable.**
- **Coordinate closely with incumbent bulk supply undertakers to ensure that Albion Water's operational response aligns with the drought plans, restrictions, and communications issued by those suppliers.**
- **Implement proportionate demand management measures to reduce water consumption during periods of increased water stress, including voluntary water efficiency campaigns and statutory restrictions where required.**
- **Provide clear, timely and consistent communications to customers regarding drought conditions, water use expectations, and any restrictions that may apply.**
- **Protect vulnerable customers, particularly those registered on the Priority Services Register (PSR), ensuring they receive appropriate support and priority communication during drought events.**
- **Promote responsible water use and encourage long-term water efficiency among customers supplied by Albion Water.**
- **Ensure regulatory compliance with the expectations of the Environment Agency, Ofwat, and Defra in relation to drought planning and drought management.**

Through these objectives, Albion Water aims to ensure that its customers experience a coordinated and effective response to drought conditions that is consistent with the wider water resource management framework of the incumbent water undertakers supplying the NAV areas

4. Bulk Supply Agreements

Bulk Supply Arrangements and Coordination During Drought

Albion Water operates as a New Appointee and Variation (NAV) water company and does not abstract, treat, or store raw water resources. All potable water supplied within the NAV areas covered by this plan is provided through bulk supply agreements with incumbent water undertakers. These agreements define the terms under which treated water is supplied to Albion Water's distribution networks via metered bulk supply points.

For the areas covered by this plan, Albion Water receives water from the following bulk suppliers:

NAV Supply Area	Bulk Supplier	Supply Arrangement
Upper Rissington	Thames Water Contact: Jason.Harper@thameswater.co.uk	Potable bulk supply delivered through a metered connection into Albion Water's distribution network
Five Oaks – Chigwell	Essex & Suffolk Water Contact: Aiden.Bertie@nwl.co.uk	Potable bulk supply delivered through a metered connection into Albion Water's distribution network

Under these arrangements, the incumbent undertakers remain responsible for the management of raw water resources, abstraction licensing, treatment processes, and strategic drought management. Albion Water is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the local distribution networks, including service reservoirs, distribution mains, and customer connections within the inset areas.

Coordination During Drought Conditions

As Albion Water relies entirely on bulk water supplied by incumbent undertakers, effective coordination with those suppliers is essential during periods of drought.

Albion Water will maintain regular communication with its bulk suppliers to ensure that any drought measures implemented by the incumbent undertakers are reflected appropriately within the NAV supply areas. This includes:

- Monitoring drought status updates issued by the bulk suppliers
- Maintaining operational liaison with the relevant water resources and operational teams of the incumbent undertakers
- Aligning drought stages and restrictions within Albion Water supply areas with those implemented by the bulk suppliers where appropriate
- Sharing relevant operational information where required to support supply resilience

Where an incumbent water company introduces voluntary water use reductions, Temporary Use Bans (TUBs), or other drought measures, Albion Water will implement equivalent customer communications and restrictions within its NAV areas to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach.

Operational Interface

The operational interface between Albion Water and the bulk suppliers is managed through metered bulk supply points, which enable monitoring of water supplied into the NAV networks. Albion Water monitors flows and demand within its distribution systems and liaises with the bulk suppliers if abnormal consumption patterns or operational issues arise.

Through these arrangements, Albion Water ensures that customers supplied within its inset areas receive a coordinated drought response that aligns with the wider water resource management strategies of the incumbent water undertakers.

5. Drought Monitoring & Triggers

Albion Water monitors several indicators that may signal increasing water stress within the bulk supply systems or distribution network. These indicators inform the escalation of drought response measures.

Bulk Supplier Drought Status

Albion Water monitors drought status announcements issued by its bulk suppliers (Thames Water and Essex & Suffolk Water). These declarations provide the primary trigger for escalating drought response actions within the NAV areas.

Where a bulk supplier declares a drought status (such as drought concern, drought, or severe drought), Albion Water will review and align its drought response measures accordingly to maintain consistency with the wider water resource management strategy.

Demand Trends within NAV Networks

Albion Water monitors water consumption data at bulk supply meters and within the distribution network to identify unusual demand patterns. Sustained increases in demand above seasonal expectations may indicate increased pressure on the supply system and may trigger demand management actions such as water efficiency communications or voluntary restrictions.

Operational Network Indicators

Operational monitoring of Albion Water's distribution infrastructure also provides early warning of potential supply constraints. Indicators may include:

- sustained changes in pressure levels within the network
- unusual flow patterns at bulk supply meters
- increased customer reports of pressure or supply issues
- operational alerts within the distribution system

These indicators may prompt further investigation and coordination with the bulk supplier.

Regulatory or Government Notifications

Albion Water also monitors drought communications and guidance issued by the Environment Agency, Defra, and other relevant regulatory bodies. Where regional or national drought alerts are issued, Albion Water will review the implications for its supply areas and coordinate with the relevant bulk suppliers.

Alignment with Bulk Supplier Actions

Given Albion Water's reliance on bulk supplies, drought escalation within NAV areas will generally follow the drought status declared by the relevant incumbent undertaker. Albion Water will align demand management measures, communications, and any restrictions with those introduced by the bulk supplier wherever appropriate to ensure a consistent approach for customers.

This approach ensures that Albion Water's drought response reflects the operational and water resource conditions affecting the underlying supply system while maintaining effective management of its local distribution networks.

6. Drought Levels & Actions

Albion Water operates as a New Appointee and Variation (NAV) company and therefore relies entirely on potable water supplied by incumbent water undertakers through bulk supply agreements. As a result, Albion Water's drought stages are designed to align with the drought stages declared by the relevant bulk supply undertakers, namely Thames Water and Essex & Suffolk Water.

Where a bulk supplier escalates its drought status or introduces specific drought measures, Albion Water will review and implement corresponding actions within its NAV supply areas to ensure a consistent and coordinated response for customers.

The drought levels used by Albion Water reflect increasing levels of water stress and are linked to operational indicators, demand trends, and drought status notifications issued by bulk suppliers.

Drought Level	Alignment with Bulk Supplier Status	Key Albion Water Actions
Level 0 – Normal Conditions	Bulk suppliers operating under normal conditions with no drought status declared.	Routine monitoring of demand and network performance, leakage management, and ongoing water efficiency messaging. Maintain liaison with bulk suppliers to monitor any emerging drought risks.
Level 1 – Early Warning	Triggered when a bulk supplier indicates drought concern or early drought status, or when increased demand or operational indicators suggest potential pressure on supply.	Increase monitoring of demand and network conditions, enhance leakage patrols, and begin voluntary water efficiency communications to customers. Albion Water will monitor updates from bulk suppliers and prepare for potential escalation.

Level 2 – Drought	Triggered when a bulk supplier declares drought conditions or introduces voluntary water use reductions.	Albion Water will support voluntary demand reduction measures and align communications with those issued by the bulk supplier. Internal monitoring will increase, and contingency planning for potential restrictions will be reviewed.
Level 3 – Severe Drought	Triggered when a bulk supplier introduces statutory drought measures such as Temporary Use Bans (TUBs).	Albion Water will implement equivalent restrictions within its NAV areas where required, communicate restrictions to customers, provide clear guidance on exemptions, and increase engagement with vulnerable customers.
Level 4 – Emergency	Triggered when the bulk supplier introduces emergency drought measures such as drought permits, drought orders, or emergency supply arrangements.	Albion Water will coordinate closely with the bulk supplier and relevant authorities, implement emergency communications, and activate contingency supply measures such as tankering or bottled water provision for vulnerable customers if required.
Recovery Phase	Initiated when the bulk supplier lifts drought restrictions and conditions return to normal.	Albion Water will communicate the lifting of restrictions to customers, review operational performance during the drought event, and undertake a post-event review to identify lessons learned.

7. Demand Management Measures

As Albion Water operates as a New Appointee and Variation (NAV) company and relies entirely on bulk potable water supplied by incumbent undertakers, demand management forms a key component of the drought response strategy. Demand reduction measures are designed to support the actions implemented by bulk suppliers while helping to reduce pressure on the shared supply system.

Demand management actions will be implemented progressively as drought conditions escalate, with measures focused on customer engagement, water efficiency, leakage reduction, and statutory restrictions where necessary.

Customer Awareness and Water Efficiency Campaigns

During early stages of drought, Albion Water will encourage customers to reduce water consumption through targeted communications and water efficiency messaging. These campaigns aim to promote responsible water use and help delay or avoid the need for statutory restrictions.

Typical actions may include:

- water saving advice published on the Albion Water website and drought information pages
- seasonal water efficiency campaigns through newsletters, social media, and local communications channels
- targeted communications encouraging customers to reduce discretionary water use (such

as garden watering and car washing)

- promotion of simple water saving behaviours within households and businesses

These campaigns will typically align with messaging issued by the relevant bulk supplier to ensure consistent advice to customers.

Voluntary Water Use Reduction

Where drought conditions intensify and bulk suppliers request voluntary water use reductions, Albion Water will support these requests by issuing clear communications encouraging customers to reduce non-essential water use.

Actions may include:

- direct customer communications through email, SMS, and website notices
- publication of voluntary water saving guidelines
- increased frequency of drought updates and customer messaging
- liaison with local stakeholders and community groups to reinforce water efficiency messages

These measures aim to reduce overall demand and help protect supplies during periods of water stress.

Leakage Management and Network Monitoring

Albion Water will continue to actively manage leakage within its distribution networks throughout drought conditions. Although Albion Water does not control raw water resources, reducing leakage within the distribution network helps minimise unnecessary water losses from the bulk supply.

Actions include:

- increased leakage detection and repair activities
- enhanced monitoring of flows and pressures within the network
- investigation of abnormal consumption patterns or network losses
- prioritisation of repairs where leaks are identified

This work helps ensure that the available water supply is used as efficiently as possible.

Temporary Use Bans (TUBs)

If drought conditions worsen and bulk suppliers introduce statutory restrictions, Albion Water will implement Temporary Use Bans (TUBs) within its NAV supply areas where appropriate. These restrictions are introduced under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991 and are designed to limit non-essential water use during severe drought conditions.

Where implemented, Albion Water will:

- publish formal notices of restrictions in accordance with statutory requirements
- communicate restrictions clearly to customers through multiple channels
- provide guidance on permitted uses and exemptions

- support vulnerable customers who may require assistance during restrictions
- monitor compliance and encourage responsible water use

Albion Water will ensure that the restrictions introduced within NAV areas are consistent with those implemented by the relevant bulk supplier, providing customers with clear and aligned guidance.

Through these measures, Albion Water aims to reduce water demand, support the wider drought management strategy of its bulk suppliers, and maintain resilient water supplies for customers during periods of water stress.

8. Supply-Side Measures

Leakage Control

Albion Water actively manages leakage within its distribution networks to minimise water losses and ensure efficient use of the bulk water supply. Leakage management is an important component of drought resilience, as reducing losses helps maintain available supply within the network.

Leakage control activities include:

- routine monitoring of flows and demand patterns
- investigation of abnormal consumption or flow trends
- targeted leakage detection surveys where required at least annual per inset
- prompt repair of identified leaks within the distribution system
- monitoring of customer-side leaks where reported

These measures help ensure that water supplied to Albion Water's networks is used efficiently, and unnecessary losses are minimised.

Pressure and Flow Monitoring

The distribution networks are monitored to ensure appropriate pressure levels are maintained for customers while identifying any unusual operational conditions.

Operational monitoring includes:

- monitoring pressures at key points within the network
- monitoring flows at bulk supply meters
- investigation of unusual pressure drops or abnormal flow patterns
- responding to customer reports of pressure or supply issues

These indicators can provide early warning of potential network issues and allow operational teams to investigate and address problems promptly.

Through these measures, Albion Water maintains operational resilience within its distribution networks and supports the effective management of water supplies during both normal operating conditions and periods of drought.

9. Incumbent Co-ordination

Albion Water monitors drought status updates issued by the relevant bulk suppliers and by regulatory bodies such as the Environment Agency. Where a bulk supplier declares a change in drought status, Albion Water will review the implications for its NAV supply areas and determine whether escalation of drought actions is required.

Notifications may be received through formal communications from the bulk supplier, industry notifications, or regulatory briefings. These notifications inform Albion Water's internal drought monitoring and decision-making processes.

Operational Liaison and Coordination Calls

During periods of increasing water stress or when drought conditions are declared, Albion Water will maintain regular operational liaison with its bulk suppliers. This may include:

- routine operational contact between operational teams
- participation in coordination calls or briefings organised by the bulk supplier
- discussions regarding demand trends, operational conditions, or supply constraints
- coordination of operational responses where required

These communications allow Albion Water to remain informed about supply conditions within the wider water resource system and to ensure that its actions are aligned with those of the incumbent undertakers.

Shared Customer Communications

Where drought communications are issued by bulk suppliers, Albion Water will aim to align its customer messaging with that of the incumbent undertakers wherever appropriate. This helps ensure that customers receive clear and consistent information regarding drought conditions, water use expectations, and any restrictions that may apply.

Customer communications may include:

- drought status updates published on Albion Water's website
- customer notifications via email, SMS, or other communication channels
- alignment with water efficiency campaigns promoted by the bulk supplier
- communications regarding voluntary water savings or statutory restrictions

By coordinating communications in this way, Albion Water ensures that customers within NAV supply areas receive messaging that is consistent with the wider regional drought response.

Escalation and Information Sharing

If operational issues arise that could affect the supply of water to Albion Water's networks, the company will liaise directly with the relevant bulk supplier to share operational information and determine appropriate mitigation measures.

This collaborative approach ensures that Albion Water can respond promptly to changes in supply conditions and maintain alignment with the drought management strategies of the incumbent water undertakers

10. Communications Strategy

Albion Water is committed to providing clear, timely, and proactive communication to customers, ensuring they receive the right information at the right time, including during drought-related events. This approach aligns with Ofwat's Condition G requirements, which emphasise that water companies must be proactive in their communications, particularly during incidents that may cause disruption or inconvenience to customers.

We ensure that contact routes remain easy to access, offering multiple channels so customers can obtain updates and support throughout all stages of a drought. This includes communicating planned actions, restrictions, service impacts, and available assistance in an accessible and transparent manner, as required under the principles for customer care.

Our customer service team proactively work to ensure that we are obtaining up to date contact details from customers so that we can deliver instant messaging to our customers in the event of an incident. We constantly review our methods to ensure that we are working in the most efficient way to do this.

Albion Water recently launched a customer portal. We are looking to see how we can use this tool to communicate and support our customers during incidents, including drought.

More information can be found in our Communications policy.

Communication Escalation Timeline

Customer communications will escalate in line with the drought stages identified in this plan.

Drought Stage	Communication Approach
Normal Conditions	Routine water efficiency messaging and seasonal communications promoting responsible water use.
Early Warning	Increased communications encouraging voluntary water savings and awareness of developing drought conditions.
Drought	Regular updates provided to customers regarding supply conditions and voluntary water use reductions.

Severe Drought	Clear communication of Temporary Use Bans or other restrictions, including guidance on prohibited activities and exemptions.
Emergency	Frequent updates on supply conditions, potential emergency measures, and support available for vulnerable customers.
Recovery	Communication confirming the lifting of restrictions and thanking customers for cooperation during the drought period.

Customer Contact Channels

Albion Water uses a range of communication channels to ensure that information reaches customers quickly and effectively. These channels allow Albion Water to provide both proactive communications and updates during drought conditions.

Communication channels may include:

- Albion Water website and dedicated drought information pages
- SMS alerts to registered customers
- Email communications and customer newsletters
- Social media updates where appropriate
- Local media announcements including radio and local press
- Parish newsletters and community noticeboards
- Direct communications with key local stakeholders and community groups

Using multiple channels helps ensure that customers receive important information even during rapidly evolving drought conditions.

Example Customer Messaging

Typical communications issued during drought conditions may include:

Voluntary Water Saving Message

“Due to continued dry weather, we are asking customers to help reduce water demand by using water wisely. Simple steps such as reducing garden watering, fixing dripping taps, and avoiding unnecessary water use can help protect local supplies.”

Temporary Use Ban Notification

“Due to ongoing drought conditions, temporary restrictions on certain water uses will come into effect from [date]. These restrictions are designed to protect water supplies and ensure that essential water use can continue.”

Drought Update Communication

“We continue to monitor water supply conditions closely and are working with our bulk suppliers to manage demand during this period of dry weather. We thank customers for their continued efforts to reduce water use.”

Communication with Vulnerable Customers

Albion Water maintains a Priority Services Register (PSR) to identify customers who may require additional support during supply interruptions or drought restrictions. Where drought measures are implemented, Albion Water will ensure that vulnerable customers receive targeted communications and appropriate assistance where required.

Through this communication framework, Albion Water ensures that customers remain informed, engaged, and supported throughout the different stages of drought management.

As Albion Water operates as a New Appointee and Variation (NAV) water company, potable water supplied to the NAV areas covered by this plan is provided through bulk supply agreements with incumbent water undertakers. Under these arrangements, the incumbent undertakers retain primary responsibility for the management of strategic water supply resilience and large-scale emergency supply measures.

Where supply disruptions or emergency drought conditions occur, emergency supply support may therefore be provided by the incumbent undertaker in accordance with the relevant bulk supply agreements and associated operational arrangements. Albion Water will work closely with the bulk supplier to coordinate any necessary support within the NAV distribution networks.

Emergency supply measures may include tanker mobilisation, bottled water provision, and the establishment of temporary water distribution points where required.

11. Environmental Statement

Albion Water operates as a New Appointee and Variation (NAV) water company and does not abstract water from the environment or operate raw water storage or treatment assets. All potable water supplied within Albion Water's NAV areas is provided through bulk supply agreements with incumbent water undertakers.

As a result, responsibility for the management of raw water resources, abstraction licensing, and environmental protection associated with water abstraction remains with the relevant incumbent undertakers. These companies manage environmental flows, abstraction controls, and drought-related environmental protections in accordance with their statutory obligations and the requirements of the Environment Agency.

Although Albion Water does not directly manage raw water resources, it plays an important role in supporting the protection of water resources during drought conditions through effective demand management and customer engagement within its distribution networks.

Albion Water supports environmental protection through the following measures:

- promoting responsible water use and water efficiency among customers
- implementing demand reduction measures during periods of water stress
- supporting voluntary water saving campaigns issued by bulk suppliers
- implementing statutory restrictions such as Temporary Use Bans where required
- maintaining efficient operation of the distribution network to minimise leakage and unnecessary water losses

Through these actions, Albion Water helps reduce demand on the wider water supply system during drought conditions and supports the environmental management measures implemented by the incumbent undertakers.

By aligning its operational response with the drought management strategies of the bulk suppliers and encouraging responsible water use among customers, Albion Water contributes to the protection of water resources and the environment during periods of drought

12. Monitoring and Reporting

Effective monitoring and reporting are essential to ensure that Albion Water can respond appropriately to developing drought conditions and maintain coordination with bulk suppliers and regulators. As a NAV undertaker supplied through bulk supply agreements, Albion Water focuses its monitoring activities on distribution network performance, demand trends, and operational indicators within the NAV areas.

Operational monitoring allows Albion Water to identify emerging issues, support demand management measures, and provide relevant updates to regulators and bulk suppliers during drought conditions.

Operational Monitoring

Albion Water monitors a range of operational indicators to assess network performance and demand within its supply areas. These indicators help identify unusual consumption patterns, potential leakage, or operational issues within the distribution system.

Operational Metric	Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Team	Purpose
Bulk supply meter flows	Meter readings and telemetry where available	Ongoing	Operations	Monitor water entering the NAV network and identify unusual demand trends
Customer demand patterns	Consumption data analysis	Ongoing	Operations / Data	Identify sustained increases in demand or unusual consumption patterns
Network pressure levels	Pressure monitoring within the distribution network	Ongoing	Operations	Identify potential supply constraints or operational issues
Leakage indicators	Review of night flows, reported leaks, and operational observations	Ongoing	Operations	Detect potential leakage and prioritise repair activities
Customer supply complaints	Customer service reports	Ongoing	Customer Services	Identify potential supply or pressure issues within the network

Leakage Reporting

Leakage monitoring is undertaken to minimise losses within the distribution network and ensure that water supplied through bulk supply agreements is used efficiently. Where leakage is identified, Albion Water will investigate and prioritise repair works to reduce unnecessary losses.

Operational teams maintain records of reported leaks, repair activities, and leakage investigations. Where significant leakage events occur, internal operational reporting will ensure that appropriate corrective actions are taken.

Regulatory and Bulk Supplier Reporting

During drought conditions, Albion Water will maintain communication with the relevant bulk suppliers and regulators as appropriate. Reporting may include updates on demand trends, operational conditions, and drought management actions.

Typical reporting activities may include:

- updates to bulk suppliers regarding operational conditions within NAV areas
- provision of operational information where requested during drought conditions
- updates to regulators where required in relation to drought measures or restrictions
- internal reporting to Albion Water management on drought status and operational performance

The frequency of reporting may increase during periods of drought or where restrictions are implemented.

Reporting Activity	Recipient	Frequency During Drought	Purpose
Operational demand updates	Bulk supplier (Thames Water / Essex & Suffolk Water)	Weekly or as requested	Maintain coordination on supply conditions
Drought status updates	Environment Agency / Ofwat (if required)	Weekly or as requested	Provide regulatory oversight of drought measures
Internal drought monitoring report	Albion Water management	Weekly	Review operational conditions and drought response actions

Customer communications updates	Customers and stakeholders	As required	Inform customers of drought status and restrictions
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Through this monitoring and reporting framework, Albion Water ensures that operational performance within its NAV supply areas is effectively tracked and that relevant stakeholders are kept informed during developing drought conditions.

13. Governance and decision Making

Drought Governance and Decision-Making

Albion Water maintains a clear governance structure to ensure that drought conditions are managed effectively and that decisions can be made in a timely and coordinated manner. The governance framework supports operational coordination with bulk suppliers, regulatory engagement, and communication with customers during drought conditions.

Drought response activities are overseen by Albion Water's Drought Management Group (DMG). The DMG is responsible for reviewing drought indicators, coordinating operational actions, and approving the escalation or de-escalation of drought response measures within Albion Water's NAV supply areas.

The DMG will meet more frequently as drought conditions escalate to ensure that operational decisions are taken promptly and that coordination with bulk suppliers and regulators is maintained.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles form the core of Albion Water's drought response governance structure.

Role	Key Responsibilities	Decision Authority
Drought Director – Managing director/Finance Director	Provides overall strategic oversight of drought response activities, chairs the Drought Management Group, and ensures coordination with regulators and bulk suppliers.	Approves escalation or de-escalation of drought stages and major operational responses.
Operations Lead – Head of Operations	Responsible for operational management of the distribution network during drought conditions, including monitoring demand, leakage management, and operational resilience.	Implements operational measures within the distribution network and coordinates with bulk suppliers on operational issues.

Communications Lead – Head of Customer Services	Manages customer communications, media engagement, and stakeholder messaging during drought conditions. Ensures messaging aligns with bulk supplier communications where appropriate.	Approves customer communications, public messaging, and drought information updates.
Compliance Lead – Head of Regulations	Oversees regulatory compliance during drought conditions, including engagement with the Environment Agency, Ofwat, and other relevant bodies.	Ensures statutory requirements are met and approves regulatory reporting or notifications.

Drought Management Group

The Drought Management Group provides a structured forum for reviewing drought indicators and coordinating Albion Water's response to developing drought conditions. The group will typically include representatives from operations, compliance, customer communications, and senior management.

Key responsibilities of the DMG include:

- reviewing operational indicators and drought triggers
- coordinating actions with bulk suppliers and relevant stakeholders
- approving demand management measures and customer communications
- ensuring regulatory obligations are met
- reviewing operational risks and mitigation measures

During normal operating conditions the DMG may meet periodically to review preparedness and monitoring information. As drought conditions escalate, meetings may occur weekly or more frequently to support timely decision-making.

Coordination with Bulk Suppliers and Regulators

Given Albion Water's reliance on bulk water supplied by incumbent undertakers, governance arrangements also include coordination with those suppliers during drought conditions. Albion Water will maintain communication with bulk suppliers and participate in coordination discussions where required to ensure that operational decisions and communications remain aligned.

Through this governance framework, Albion Water ensures that drought management decisions are taken in a structured and transparent manner while maintaining effective coordination with bulk suppliers, regulators, and customers.

14. Post-Drought Review

Post-Drought Review and Lessons Learned

Following the end of a drought event or the lifting of drought restrictions, Albion Water will undertake a structured post-event review to evaluate the effectiveness of its drought response. The purpose of this review is to identify lessons learned, assess the effectiveness of operational and communication measures, and ensure that improvements are incorporated into future drought planning and operational procedures.

Recording Operational Experience

During drought conditions, operational teams will maintain records of key activities undertaken as part of the drought response. These records may include:

- demand trends and operational monitoring data
- leakage investigations and repair activities
- customer communications issued during the drought period
- operational coordination with bulk suppliers
- customer complaints or supply issues reported during the event
- implementation of voluntary restrictions or Temporary Use Bans

Maintaining this information ensures that the organisation has a clear record of the actions taken during the drought event.

Internal Review Process

Once drought conditions have returned to normal and restrictions have been lifted, Albion Water will carry out an internal review through the Drought Management Group (DMG).

The review will typically consider:

- the effectiveness of demand management measures
- performance of the distribution network during the drought event
- effectiveness of communication with customers and stakeholders
- coordination with bulk suppliers and operational partners
- support provided to vulnerable customers
- any operational issues encountered during the drought response

Where improvements are identified, actions will be recorded and incorporated into operational procedures or future updates of the drought plan.

Continuous Improvement

Findings from the post-drought review will be used to improve Albion Water's drought preparedness and response capabilities. This may include:

- updates to operational procedures
- improvements to monitoring and reporting processes
- enhancements to customer communication strategies
- updates to the drought plan where appropriate

Lessons learned will be documented internally and tracked through Albion Water's operational governance processes to ensure that improvements are implemented.

Regulatory Reporting and Engagement

Where appropriate, Albion Water will share relevant information from the post-event review with regulators, including the Environment Agency and Ofwat. This may include summaries of operational performance, lessons learned, and any improvements implemented following the drought event.

This process ensures that Albion Water maintains transparency with regulators and continues to improve its drought management approach in line with regulatory expectations.

15. Compliance Statement

Plans comply with statutory drought guidance. Reviewed every 5 years (next due 2031), updated sooner if material changes occur.

Appendices

Appendix A – Operational Checklists

Checklist for each drought level to ensure operational readiness:

Level	Key Operational Actions
Level 0 – Normal	Routine leakage checks, monthly DMG review, seasonal efficiency campaigns.
Level 1 – Early Warning	Daily storage monitoring, double leakage patrols, activate microsite, issue voluntary savings notice.
Level 2 – Drought	Daily DMG meetings, tankering standby, weekly customer updates.
Level 3 – Severe	Implement TUBs, PSR customer contact, posters/media rollout, weekly regulator reports.
Level 4 – Emergency	Activate tankering, bottled water to PSR, daily regulator briefings, community distribution points.

Appendix B – Consultation Response Template

Template for recording and addressing consultation feedback:

- Date of response received
- Respondent (organisation / individual)
- Summary of feedback
- Albion Water's response
- Action taken (if any)
- Status (open/closed)

Appendix C – Stakeholder Contact List

Stakeholder	Contact Details
Environment Agency	Drought team, regional office, 24/7 incident hotline.
Ofwat	Regulatory contact officer for NAVs.
Defra	Water Resources Policy team contact.
Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)	Inspector assigned to Albion Water NAV operations.
Thames Water	Drought coordination manager, emergency contact line.
Essex & Suffolk Water	Water resources manager, bulk supply contact.
Local Resilience Forum (Gloucestershire)	Emergency planning lead officer.
Local Resilience Forum (Essex)	Emergency planning lead officer.

Appendix D – Legal Requirements Checklist for TUBs

Temporary Use Bans (TUBs)

Temporary Use Bans (TUBs) may be introduced during periods of severe drought to restrict certain non-essential uses of water. These restrictions are implemented in accordance with the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991, which provides water undertakers with statutory powers to prohibit specified uses of water supplied by the public water supply system.

As Albion Water operates as a New Appointee and Variation (NAV) company supplied through bulk supply agreements, the introduction of TUBs within Albion Water supply areas will normally align with restrictions introduced by the relevant bulk supply undertaker. Albion Water will implement restrictions within its NAV areas where necessary to ensure a consistent approach to water use across the wider supply system.

Decision to Implement Temporary Use Bans

The decision to introduce TUBs will be informed by:

- drought status declarations issued by the relevant bulk supplier
- guidance from the Environment Agency and relevant government departments
- operational information regarding supply conditions within Albion Water's networks
- alignment with restrictions introduced by the bulk supplier

Any decision to implement restrictions will be reviewed internally by Albion Water's drought management team to ensure that statutory requirements are met.

Consultation and Public Notice

Where Temporary Use Bans are implemented, Albion Water will follow the statutory requirements set out under the Water Industry Act 1991 and associated guidance. This includes issuing appropriate public notices and ensuring that customers are informed of the restrictions before they take effect.

Public notification may include:

- publication of formal notices on the Albion Water website
- notification through local media where appropriate
- direct communication to customers through email, SMS, or other channels
- information provided through local community networks or parish communications

Customers will be provided with clear information regarding the restrictions, the reasons for their introduction, and the date on which they will come into force.

Exemptions

Certain water use may be exempt from Temporary Use Bans in accordance with statutory provisions and government guidance. These exemptions may include uses required for:

- health or safety purposes
- essential commercial activities, where permitted
- watering of food crops or livestock
- customers with specific medical or accessibility needs

Albion Water will provide clear guidance on exemptions and will ensure that customers are aware of how exemptions apply.

Enforcement and Compliance

Albion Water will adopt an education-first approach to the enforcement of Temporary Use Bans. The primary aim of enforcement activities is to encourage compliance and responsible water use rather than to penalise customers.

Enforcement measures may include:

- providing guidance and reminders regarding the restrictions
- responding to reports of non-compliance
- issuing warning communications where necessary
- escalating enforcement actions where repeated breaches occur

Albion Water will ensure that enforcement activities are proportionate and consistent with statutory requirements.

Lifting Restrictions

Temporary Use Bans will remain in place until supply conditions improve, and the relevant bulk supplier or regulators indicate that restrictions are no longer required. Albion Water will communicate clearly with customers when restrictions are lifted and will provide guidance on the return to normal water use.

Through this approach, Albion Water ensures that Temporary Use Bans are implemented in a manner that complies with the Water Industry Act 1991, supports the wider drought management strategy of the incumbent undertakers, and maintains clear communication with customers.

Stage	Actions Required
Decision & Authority	Confirm triggers met; DMG approval; Legal officer confirmation of statutory authority.
Regulatory Notifications	Notify EA, Ofwat, Defra; log decision internally.
Customer Consultation	Publish draft notice; allow 7 days for responses; log feedback.
Public Notice	Final notice issued 7 days before start; publish via website, newspapers, parish boards, social media, radio; direct SMS/email to customers.
Exemptions & Support	Clearly communicate exemptions; process applications; notify PSR customers.

Enforcement	Train staff; advice-first approach; warning letters; escalate repeat breaches.
Media Engagement	Issue press release; spokesperson briefing; weekly updates; Q&A pack for councils.
Monitoring & Review	Weekly demand monitoring; 14-day DMG reviews; weekly regulator updates.
Lifting a TUB	DMG approves; notify customers 7 days before lifting; thank-you campaign; post-event regulatory review.

Appendix E - Emergency Alternative Supply

Tanker Mobilisation

In the event of significant supply disruption affecting the bulk supply or distribution network, tanker support may be arranged through the incumbent undertaker's emergency response arrangements or through pre-existing emergency support contracts.

Where tanker support is required:

- the incumbent undertaker may mobilise tanker resources as part of its emergency supply obligations under the bulk supply agreement
- Albion Water will coordinate with the bulk supplier to identify suitable locations within the distribution network for tanker operations where appropriate
- Albion Water will support site access, operational coordination, and communication with customers within the NAV area

Bottled Water Distribution

Where a supply interruption affects customers within the NAV area, bottled water provision may be organised through the incumbent undertaker's established emergency supply arrangements. Albion Water will support the distribution process within its supply areas where required.

This may include:

- coordination with the incumbent undertaker regarding bottled water provision
- prioritisation of bottled water deliveries for customers registered on the Priority Services Register (PSR)
- communication with customers regarding collection arrangements or delivery support

Community Water Distribution Points

If supply interruptions affect a wider area, temporary community water distribution points may be established. These locations allow customers to collect bottled water or emergency supplies during supply disruptions.

Distribution points may be organised by the incumbent undertaker as part of its emergency response arrangements. Albion Water will assist by:

- identifying suitable local locations within the NAV supply area
- supporting coordination with local authorities or Local Resilience Forums where required
- communicating distribution point locations and opening times to customers
- supporting operational arrangements within the local supply area

Support for Vulnerable Customers

Customers registered on Albion Water's Priority Services Register (PSR) will receive additional support during supply interruptions. Where emergency supply arrangements are activated, bottled water deliveries or additional assistance may be provided for vulnerable customers who are unable to access community distribution points.

Albion Water will work with the incumbent undertaker to ensure that vulnerable customers within the NAV supply areas are identified and supported appropriately during emergency supply events.

Through coordination with bulk suppliers and emergency partners, Albion Water ensures that appropriate emergency support arrangements are available to customers while maintaining alignment with the responsibilities and operational frameworks established under the bulk supply agreements.

Appendix F - Drought Trigger Summary

As Albion Water operates as a New Appointee and Variation (NAV) company and relies on potable water supplied by incumbent water undertakers, drought triggers are primarily based on external supply signals, operational indicators, and demand trends rather than raw water storage levels or abstraction conditions.

The following trigger indicators are used to identify escalating drought conditions and to support decision-making by the Drought Management Group.

Indicator Category	Trigger Indicator	Monitoring Method	Typical Response
Bulk Supplier Drought Status	Drought declarations issued by Thames Water or Essex & Suffolk Water	Review of supplier notifications and operational liaison	Review internal drought stage and align actions with bulk supplier
Demand Trends	Sustained increase in demand above seasonal norms	Monitoring bulk supply meter flows and network demand data	Initiate customer water efficiency messaging
Operational Network Indicators	Pressure changes, unusual flows, or supply complaints	Operational monitoring and customer service reporting	Investigate operational issues and review drought escalation
Regulatory Notifications	EA drought alerts or regional water resource warnings	Monitoring regulatory communications	Review drought readiness and coordinate with bulk suppliers
Leakage Indicators	Increase in night flows or reported leaks	Operational monitoring and leakage investigation	Prioritise leak detection and repair activities

These triggers ensure Albion Water can respond appropriately to developing supply pressures while maintaining alignment with the drought management actions of the incumbent water undertakers.

Appendix G - Escalation Process

Albion Water operates a structured escalation process to ensure that drought decisions are taken in a timely and coordinated manner. This process allows operational indicators and external drought signals to be reviewed systematically and ensures that the appropriate response actions are implemented as conditions develop.

The escalation process is managed through the Drought Management Group (DMG), which is responsible for reviewing operational information and approving the escalation or de-escalation of drought response measures.

Escalation Process

1. Monitoring Stage

Operational teams monitor demand trends, network performance, and communications from bulk suppliers and regulators.

2. Trigger Identification

If drought indicators are identified (such as increased demand or drought declarations by bulk suppliers), the issue is escalated internally to the Drought Management Group.

3. Drought Management Group Review

The DMG reviews available information, including demand data, operational conditions, and guidance from bulk suppliers and regulators.

4. Decision and Implementation

If escalation is required, the DMG will approve appropriate drought response measures, which may include:

- enhanced demand monitoring
- increased customer communications
- voluntary water saving campaigns
- implementation of statutory restrictions where required

5. Ongoing Monitoring

Operational indicators continue to be monitored and the DMG meets regularly during drought conditions to review the effectiveness of measures implemented.

6. De-escalation and Recovery

Once supply conditions improve and drought measures are lifted by bulk suppliers; Albion Water will begin de-escalation actions and initiate the post-drought review process.

