

Press release: Drought planning continues after hot summer puts pressure on environment

The National Drought Group has urged people to use water wisely following a meeting to discuss pressure on water resources and the environment following this summer's heat wave.

The environment has suffered due to the driest May to July across England since 1921. The Environment Agency (EA) responded to a 330% increase in significant drought-related incidents as teams acted to protect wildlife and rescue fish struggling due to low river flows.

Numerous species, habitats, birds, trees and aquatic life have been affected by the hot, dry summer and high demand for water. EA hydrologists recorded 'exceptionally low' river flows for 5 weeks in a row, reservoir stocks for England as a whole were at historic lows for the end of July and soils were the driest on record in the North West.

The EA's Chief Executive, Sir James Bevan, chaired the National Drought Group meeting and received updates from water companies, discussed ways to protect the environment and sustain support for farmers and businesses. Water companies were asked to outline progress against agreed action plans to maintain water supplies while protecting the environment. They reported that there are no current plans to bring in Temporary Use Bans (hosepipe bans) although water restrictions remain a possibility if rainfall in September is low.

The EA has taken a range of actions to respond to the impacts of dry weather including:

- Supporting farmers by allowing more flexibility with water abstraction in order to safeguard food production and animal welfare.
- Operating water transfers to help maintain river flows.
- Increased monitoring and inspection of businesses abstracting water to ensure they are not taking more water than they need.
- Issuing 4 drought permits to United Utilities at locations in Cumbria, should they be needed later in the year.
- Not cleaning EA fleet vehicles and office windows to avoid unnecessary water usage.

Although August has seen dry periods interrupted by bouts of wet weather, the Met Office 3 month outlook for September to November forecasts that above average temperatures and slightly lower than average rainfall are likely.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency said:

Over the last few months of prolonged dry weather the Environment

Agency, the water companies and many others have been working hard together to reduce the risk of water restrictions and balance the needs of the public, businesses and the environment.

Despite the recent rain, we will need to continue to collaborate closely as we move into autumn. All of us have a role to play in helping to protect the environment and maintain supplies. We encourage everyone to use water wisely.

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Notice: EX16 8EU, LJ Heywood Limited: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and the decision document for:

- Operator name: LJ Heywood Limited
 - Installation name: Hollyfield Farm
 - Permit number: EPR/KP3733JQ
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Guidance: Land contamination pilot trials and small scale remediation schemes: RPS 215

If you comply with the conditions in this regulatory position statement (RPS) you do not need to apply for an environmental permit for a waste operation for:

- site-specific pilot trials
- small scale remediation schemes

Decision: Hornsea Two Offshore Wind Farm – Variation 1

In September 2016, the Secretary of State granted a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the Hornsea Project Two offshore wind farm. The pre-application, examination and DCO documents can be found on the Planning Inspectorate website.

The DCO authorises DONG Energy to construct and operate up to 2 offshore generating stations with a maximum capacity of 1800MW. The project is located adjacent to Hornsea Project One offshore wind farm in the North Sea and is located approximately 90km off the East Yorkshire coast. The development could comprise of up to:

- 300 wind turbines
- 2 offshore accommodation platforms
- 6 offshore HVAC collector substations
- 2 offshore HVDC converter substations
- 2 offshore HVAC reactive compensation stations
- subsea inter-array electrical circuits
- subsea cable connections to the shore

On 18 July 2017, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) received a request from DONG Energy to vary the Deemed Marine Licences contained within Schedules 9 and 11 of the Hornsea Two Offshore Wind Farm Order 2016.

The MMOs decision was to vary the DML as detailed in the Notice of Variation, effective from 26 September 2017.