

Abstraction licences issued for Isles of Scilly public water supply

Water supplies on the Isles of Scilly are 60% from groundwater and the remainder from their desalination plant.

South West Water (SWW) is responsible for water and sewerage provision to the majority of households and businesses on the islands. Prior to October last year, abstractors were exempt from the need to hold licences to abstract. But in response to the passing of the Isles of Scilly (Application of Water Legislation) Order 2020 last year, SWW submitted applications for their public water supply abstractions.

Following a detailed assessment of the applications, the Environment Agency has this month issued 6 licences to SWW, covering abstractions from 21 wells and boreholes across the islands.

Determining the licences for these historic wells and boreholes has been a lengthy process. Whilst determining the licences the Environment Agency has been assessing the risks of the abstractions upon the islands' nationally and internationally designated sites – including 7 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection area, Ramsar and Marine Conservation Zone, as well as risks to private borehole abstractions.

A condition of the licences has been the agreement between Environment Agency, SWW, Natural England and the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust that environmental monitoring takes place to improve our understanding of the risks of the now licensed abstractions on the designated sites.

Mark Pilcher, from the Environment Agency, said:

“We have been working hard with Defra over the last decade to apply mainland environmental legislation across to the Isles of Scilly to ensure that the fragile and highly sensitive environment is protected.

“The islands have vulnerable and limited groundwater supplies, so having the ability to now licence and regulate abstraction is an essential part of supporting sustainability on the islands for people and wildlife.

“Issuing these licences is a significant milestone. For the first time we will have appropriate regulatory tools to ensure that groundwater abstraction on the islands remains balanced and well managed”.

Rob Scarrott, Head of Water Resources and Water Efficiency at South West Water, said:

“Securing licences for abstraction and desalination is a significant step in safeguarding water supply and the environment of the Isles of Scilly. As part of the new agreement, sites of groundwater abstraction will be strictly

monitored to ensure there is no impact on the natural environment.

“South West Water, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust have worked hard to understand the potential challenges and to secure the best outcome for the Islands.”

[RWM welcomes proposed GDF search area in Allerdale](#)

RWM has welcomed the proposed search area in Allerdale, Cumbria, for further engagement and investigation for a potentially suitable GDF site.

Allerdale GDF Working Group has been discussing geological disposal with local people since January and identified the area using existing information which includes local geology, environmental issues, transport infrastructure and safety. Local views were also taken into account following a series of public events and online engagement over the past nine months.

The area comprises 13 electoral wards of Allerdale Borough Council, covering 320 sq km: Aspatria; Broughton St Bridgets; Dalton; Ellen & Gilcruix; Flimby; Harrington & Salterbeck; Maryport North; Maryport South; Moorclose & Moss Bay; Seaton & Northside; St John's; St Michael's and Stainburn & Clifton.

Any land inside the boundary of the Lake District National Park (LDNP), and its proposed extension, will remain excluded from consideration for both the underground and surface parts of a GDF.

RWM's initial evaluation has confirmed that the proposed area does have potential worth exploring. A period of detailed investigations would be needed to narrow down any possibilities within this area and confirm suitability.

The deep geology off the coastline is also being considered for the underground elements of a GDF. This means a land-based surface facility of around 1 sq km could provide access to underground tunnels and vaults located many kilometres away, covering up to 20 sq km and constructed in rocks up to 1,000 metres deep.

The next part of the process will involve forming a Community Partnership to continue discussions, a move that will require support and participation from at least one local authority – Allerdale Borough Council or Cumbria County Council.

If a Community Partnership is formed, there will be a process for identifying and recruiting groups, organisations, and individuals as members, aiming to reflect the make-up of the community. Its activities would include further

public engagement and creating a long-term vision for the community.

Formation of a longer-term Community Partnership would also trigger access to community investment funding that would be available for projects and initiatives in the search area that drive economic development, enhance the local environment or improve community well-being.

RWM Siting and Community Engagement Director Simon Hughes said:

RWM has been fully engaged with the Allerdale GDF Working Group as it begins to consider a GDF locally. It has been a real privilege to join discussions around the area, to hear local views, answer questions and explain this vital project.

We welcome the progress already made by the Working Group and very much look forward to continuing engagement with local people, whose views form an important part of the siting process.

Detailed investigations would be needed before any conclusions are reached on a particular site to develop, and we fully appreciate the importance of excluding the Lake District National Park and any proposed extension. A Community Partnership will continue to engage as it considers further refinements to the search area in future.

Allerdale GDF Working Group was the second to form in England and followed the first Working Group in neighbouring Copeland, which was established last November. Last week, two search areas were proposed in Copeland, representing real progress in the nationwide search for a location where higher-activity radioactive waste could be disposed of safely and securely.

RWM continues to hold informal discussions in other parts of the country that may lead to the formation of additional Working Groups.

Construction of a GDF requires both a suitable site and willing community. If a suitable site is eventually found in Allerdale, a Test of Public Support would be held with those living in the wards affected. The project could only go ahead with explicit public support.

[Read the Allerdale GDF Working Group announcement](#)

Learn more about [geological disposal](#).

[**Offenders to pay back society more**](#)

visibly under £90 million plan

- up to £93 million to increase the community work undertaken by offenders to eight million hours per year
- new outdoor projects nationwide so public see the benefits and justice being done
- first new initiative will see offenders clean up country's waterways

Up to £93 million extra will be invested over the next 3 years to increase the community work undertaken by offenders to around 8 million hours per year.

The funding will be used to recruit 500 more community work supervisors and develop new national partnerships between the Probation Service and major organisations. There will be a particular focus on outdoor projects that help improve the environment and allow the public to see justice being done.

Offenders will clean up hundreds of miles of rivers and canals every year under the first such agreement. The deal with the Canal & River Trust will see offenders make reparation to their local communities by clearing litter, tidying tow paths and maintaining beauty spots along the 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales.

The move is designed to restore the public's confidence in community sentences by ensuring offenders are visibly atoning for their crimes in a way which benefits local people.

Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor Dominic Raab MP said:

It is right that the offenders who have damaged their communities should be seen to pay back with their time and some hard graft.

With new projects such as the one run by The Canal & River Trust offenders will learn new skills and do their bit clearing and maintaining our country's waterways.

Offenders will wear a high-visibility "Community Payback" tabard while they work, and the initiative will also provide training opportunities for them to develop skills to boost their employability.

Probation services have previously worked with the Canal & River Trust on projects in the West Midlands and London and this new partnership will see that type of work replicated and expanded across England and Wales.

The government is aiming to sign a range of partnerships with national organisations over the coming months and is working with local authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners to identify new projects. It comes after the creation of the new Probation Service in June which saw the government

take on the delivery of unpaid work.

Community Payback will see a renewed focus on cleaning up streets, alleyways, housing estates and other open spaces, helping to cut crime and the fear of crime, and making a real difference to the quality of life for local people in neighbourhoods most affected by crime and anti-social behaviour.

More than £300 million worth of extra funding has been pumped into the Probation Service since July 2019 helping to more than double the recruitment of trainee probation officers to a record high of 1,500 this financial year. Combined with the innovative use of tags, it means staff can keep a closer eye on the most dangerous offenders and ensure many more take up the opportunity to reform their criminal ways.

Tens of thousands more criminals to be tagged to cut crime and protect victims

- new £183 million investment to support near doubling of number of people on tags
- GPS tags to deter thieves and burglars and help protect domestic abuse victims
- dedicated £19 million fund to promote innovation and new technology

Around ten thousand of those will be prolific robbers, thieves and burglars fitted with GPS tags as they come out of prison. This world-first project – [which began in April](#) – expanded to half of England and Wales last week and will now be funded for a further three years. It recently saw the first conviction using location data to pin a thief to the scene of further crimes and is deterring others from reoffending. The intention is to roll it out nationwide, if successful at curbing crime and helping police catch offenders.

In another world-first, alcohol monitoring tags will also be used on more than 12,000 prison leavers known to commit crimes when under the influence over the same period – helping keep them off alcohol altogether or limit their drinking to reduce the risk of them reoffending. It follows their successful use on offenders serving community sentences since last October to help cut the £22 billion cost of alcohol-related crime.

Over 3,500 high-risk domestic abusers will have their whereabouts monitored using GPS tags to protect victims and children from further trauma. The tags may also help the Probation Service discover relationships that offenders are keeping secret so they can alert new partners.

The £183 million investment will help almost double the number of people tagged at any one time from around 13,500 this year to approximately 25,000 by 2025.

Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor, Dominic Raab MP said:

This major increase in high-tech GPS tagging will see us leading the world in using technology to fight crime and keep victims safe.

From tackling alcohol-fuelled violence and burglary to protecting domestic abuse victims, we are developing tags to make our streets and communities safer.

A £19 million Innovation Fund will be used to test different ways of using existing technology to cut crime and foster the development of new types of tags. An area of particular interest is whether new technology could be developed which would notify police or probation staff if an offender has been taking illegal drugs.

GPS tags have been used nationwide since 2019 to monitor offenders' compliance with licence conditions and court requirements, including exclusion zones. Judges can order them as part of bail conditions and the Home Office will increase its use of GPS tagging devices for foreign national offenders to monitor 4,500 at any one time by the end of next year.

Alcohol monitoring tags, which measure alcohol levels in sweat, have been ordered [for over 1,500 offenders serving community sentences](#) since they were first rolled out in October last year.

Notes to editors

- In the Acquisitive Crime GPS tagging project, GPS tags are fitted to eligible burglars, robbers and thieves serving a sentence of a year or more following their release from prison. This means their whereabouts can be monitored by GPS satellites 24 hours a day for up to 12 months.
- In areas where the scheme is operating, the police submit daily crime data on burglaries, thefts and robberies to a dedicated unit set up in HM Prison and Probation Service. Trained staff then map records of offender movements against the details of the crimes and share the relevant data with the police, helping them to eliminate or investigate suspects and prosecute further offences.
- The programme launched in Avon and Somerset, Cheshire, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Humberside and West Midlands on 12 April.
- This expansion last week (29 September) saw it introduced to Bedfordshire, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Durham, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, North Wales, Nottinghamshire, Sussex and Greater London (City of London and Metropolitan Police areas).
- The use of GPS tagging in this way is being evaluated and if it proves effective at reducing reoffending and helping police identify

perpetrators it could be rolled out nationwide.

[Time is running out for tax credits and Child Benefit customers with Post Office card accounts](#)

Press release

HMRC urges tax credits and Child Benefits customers with a Post Office card account to update HMRC with their new bank account details by 30 November 2021.



From 1 December 2021, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will stop making payments of Child Benefit, Guardian's Allowance and tax credits into Post Office card accounts.

HMRC is urging customers who receive their payments via this method to act now so they still get their money on time.

Any tax credits, Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance customers who receive their benefits or payments via a Post Office card account have until 30 November 2021 to set up a new account and notify HMRC of the details so they can continue to receive their payments. Any suspended payments will be held and then paid to the customer once they notify HMRC of the new details.

If customers already have an alternative bank account, they can contact HMRC now to update their details. If they do not have an alternative, they should set up a new bank, building society or credit union account to receive their money.

Customers can use their Personal Tax Account to provide revised account details. Alternatively, Child Benefit customers can [change their bank account](#)

[details via GOV.UK](#) or by contacting the Child Benefit helpline on 0300 200 3100. Tax credits customers can [change their bank account details](#) by contacting the tax credits helpline on 0345 300 3900. If customers cannot open a bank account, they should contact HMRC.

The Money Advice and Pensions Service offers information and advice about [how to choose the right current account](#) and [how to open an account](#).

HMRC has been writing to affected customers since October 2019 to notify them that their Post Office card accounts will be closing, urging them to take action so their payments are not affected.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) [announced last month](#) that it has agreed a 12-month extension for its customers who use a Post Office card account. If any HMRC customer also receives DWP payments, this extension only applies to DWP-related payments.

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