

# Water protocol to protect consumers – and devolution settlement

The UK Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs currently has intervention powers which mean he or she can repeal Assembly legislation or intervene in the exercise of devolved functions which he or she believes risks having a serious adverse impact on water resources, water supply or water quality in England. Welsh Government Ministers do not have reciprocal powers.

The protocol, which is being laid jointly before the UK Parliament and National Assembly for Wales, paves the way for the repeal of these outdated intervention powers next year.

The protocol reaffirms the close working between the Welsh and UK Governments on essential matters of water resources, water supply and water quality. It also dictates no action or inaction of either administration should have any serious adverse impact on either Wales or England respectively.

Speaking ahead of the laying of the protocol, the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths said:

“The introduction of this protocol addresses an existing imbalance in the devolution settlement that could, in theory, result in UK Government Ministers intervening in matters that are the responsibility of the Welsh Government.

“I am pleased with the constructive and positive way in which both administrations have approached the drafting and implementation of an agreement which, importantly, means water consumers on both sides of the border are safeguarded”.