



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

# Abstraction Reform Update

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# Overview

- A reminder of...
  - Why we are doing it
  - What we consulted on
- What have we done since
  - Transition
  - Low flow controls
  - Discharges
  - Instructions
- What are the next steps (inc NA)

# Why reform?

- Major future risk – Water Scarcity....
  - Drier summers under climate change
  - Increasing population demanding water
- .....And an old abstraction regime not up to this challenge as costly, slow and bureaucratic...
  - to protect the environment; and
  - to trade and share out water.
- Which means
  - We don't make the most of the water available
  - It is costly to abstractors to run and may even collapse under the strain.

# What did we propose in our consultation

- Better management of s-t variable flows:
  - Better access to temporary high flows to fill reservoirs
  - ‘Smart’ HoFs or short variable allocations
  - Facilitating short-term trading through pre-approval
    - Current System Plus vs Water Shares
  - Low flow controls
    - *All particularly focused where it matters*
- ....And of long-term pressures
  - Removal of ‘paper water’ at transition
  - Reviewable permits but no time limits
  - Integrating discharges

# What have we done since

- Transition
  - Moving to an env risk based approach
  - Exploring approaches to adjusting licensed volumes
  - Developing an appeals process
- Low flows
  - Examining links to drought
  - Exploring proportionate, catchment based approaches
- Discharges
  - Exploring options for water company discharges
- Instructions
  - Developing the permitting approach

# Next steps

- Abstraction reform
  - SoS committed to reform – 15/9 speech
  - Currently developing response to consultation
  - Finalising approach to legislation
- New authorisations
  - Key stage towards abstraction reform
  - Light-touch, risk based approach to licensing
  - Consultation in 2015 on approach

