

Thames Water Defers Decision on Drought Order

Board members have decided that, while the drought is serious, the situation does not yet warrant applying for further restrictions. Local river flows are being maintained, reservoir storage is increasing and demand is falling.

Jeremy Pelczer, Chief Executive of Thames Water, said: "Our current projections indicate that the situation remains serious, but does not yet justify an application for a Drought Order.

"In making a decision, we need to consider long-term questions, such as how long the drought might last and the possibility of a third consecutive dry winter. We also need to take into account more immediate issues like rainfall levels, the ability to recharge reservoirs and ongoing efforts to reduce demand.

"We are very mindful of the impact a Drought Order would have on many individuals and businesses, whilst at the same time we understand the very legitimate concerns of the Environment Agency. We have discussed our decision with the Agency, to keep them closely informed.

"The situation remains finely balanced, and we will continue to review it weekly. There remains a distinct possibility that we will need to apply for a Drought Order in the coming weeks.

"The 18-month drought means we are still in a serious position, and we are continuing to invest record resources to tackle leakage, where much remains to be done, as well as encouraging our customers to use water wisely.

"We would like to thank the many people across our region who are already saving water. This, together with the hosepipe and sprinkler ban, is helping to conserve supplies."

Thames Water introduced a hosepipe and sprinkler ban across its region – the first restrictions for 15 years – on 3 April.

Source: Thames Water 19th May 2006 (www.thames-water.com)