

Issue 2/2018

Ofwat: Water consumption in the UK could be reduced by two thirds

Ofwat (the economic water regulatory body for the privatised water industry in England and Wales) has published a report 'The long term potential for deep reductions in household water demand', outlining the considerable potential for water savings in households.

In May 2018, Ofwat (the economic water regulatory body for the privatised water industry in England and Wales) published a report 'The long term potential for deep reductions in household water demand', elaborated for OFWAT by Artesia Consulting.

Commenting on the report, John Russell, Ofwat's Senior Director of Strategy and Planning, said: "With a fifty-year time horizon, we can afford to look beyond the current constraints, to think about the deep reductions that consumers could make, if we all work together. As well as being an important resource for our future price reviews – and to an extent the one that's gearing up now - we hope that this study provokes discussion in the sector."

With climate change and a growing population likely to place ever greater strains on our vital water resources, the regulator is exploring the kind of things that could help to cut demand for water over the next 50 years - from fixing leaky loos to investing in major new innovations. A report released in May 2018 explores what demand for water might be in 2065. The report shows that on average, we currently use about 140 litres of water per person per day in England and Wales, up from 85 litres per person in the 1960s.

The report's findings also reveal that tackling household leaks and using innovative technologies could help to decrease water usage by two thirds – or over one bath per person per day - over the next 50 years.

Climate change is going to have a significant impact on the water sector, though due to its inherently unpredictable nature, we do not know to what extent. There are projections that suggest the UK population could grow by upwards of 10 million people over the next 20 to 30 years.

The main way in which water companies have met rising demand in the past has been through measures including taking more water from the environment and building infrastructure to store it. But this isn't without its environmental and structural problems, so new solutions are needed.

Full report

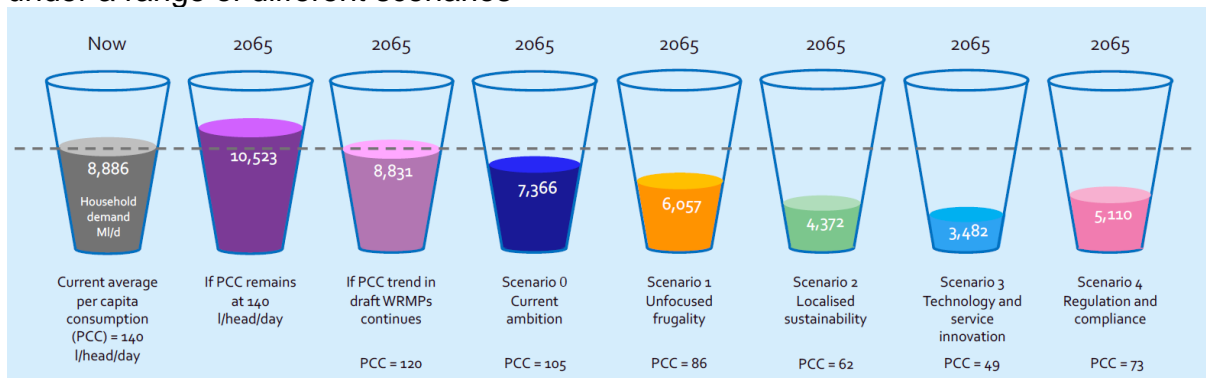
<https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/publication/long-term-potential-deep-reductions-household-water-demand-report-artesia-consulting/>

Graphics 1:



Graphics 2:

Summary of impacts: The volume of household demand (in MI/d) now, and in 2065 under a range of different scenarios



The volumes quoted are MI/d, and assume current ONS population growth for England and Wales to 2065. The dotted line represents the volume used now for household demand. This illustrates how demand measures could reduce the amount of water needed for household demand, offsetting some of the pressures on long term resilience.