

Water Targets Expert Advisory Group: Water Demand

Meeting notes, Thursday 7 September 2021, 10:05-12:00 on MS Teams

Defra and Environment Agency (EA) attendees

Expert Members: Penny Johnes (Chair); Paul Withers; Joseph Holden; Nicci Russell; Rob Lawson; Kevin Hiscock

1) Defra Presentation

Defra presented on the proposed level of ambition for the water demand target and the metric.

2) Discussion

Experts presented on the different demands on public and non-public supply of water, and how climate change will impact upon this.

Discussion between Defra and members of the Water Expert Advisory Group included the following topics:

- The proposed water demand target metric.
- The increase in home working and potential resulting pressure on smaller local sewage treatment plants, septic tanks and water supply works.
- The evidence base used to assess non-consumptive water demand (where water is removed and later returned to the environment e.g. water used for industrial cooling).
- The relationship between the proposed target and the National Water Resources Framework recommendations on water demand.
- The benefits of using total household consumption rather than per capita consumption in the metric.
- How uncertainty over population growth could affect the target and projections for water demand.

A summary of the advice and discussion from the Water Expert Advisory Group has been incorporated into the Detailed Evidence Report which accompanies our Environment Act 2021: environmental targets.