

Water resources: managing abstraction

23 November 2023

What is abstraction?

- Taking water from the environment for a specific use
 - Public/private water supply
 - Industrial, commercial, public services purposes
 - Power generation purposes
 - Agricultural purposes
 - Environmental purposes
- Abstraction may be from ground or surface water sources and take place by a variety of means



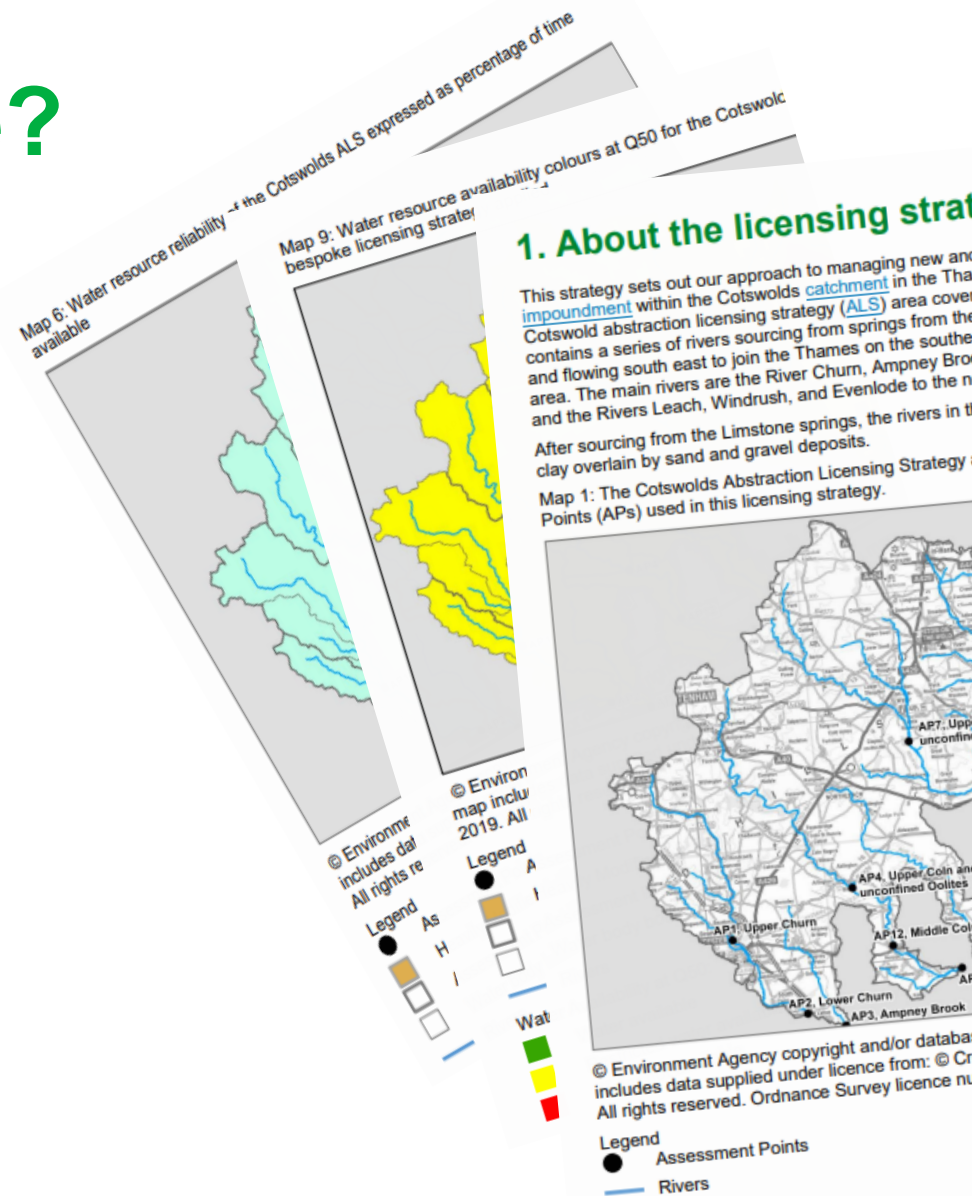
Why do we licence?



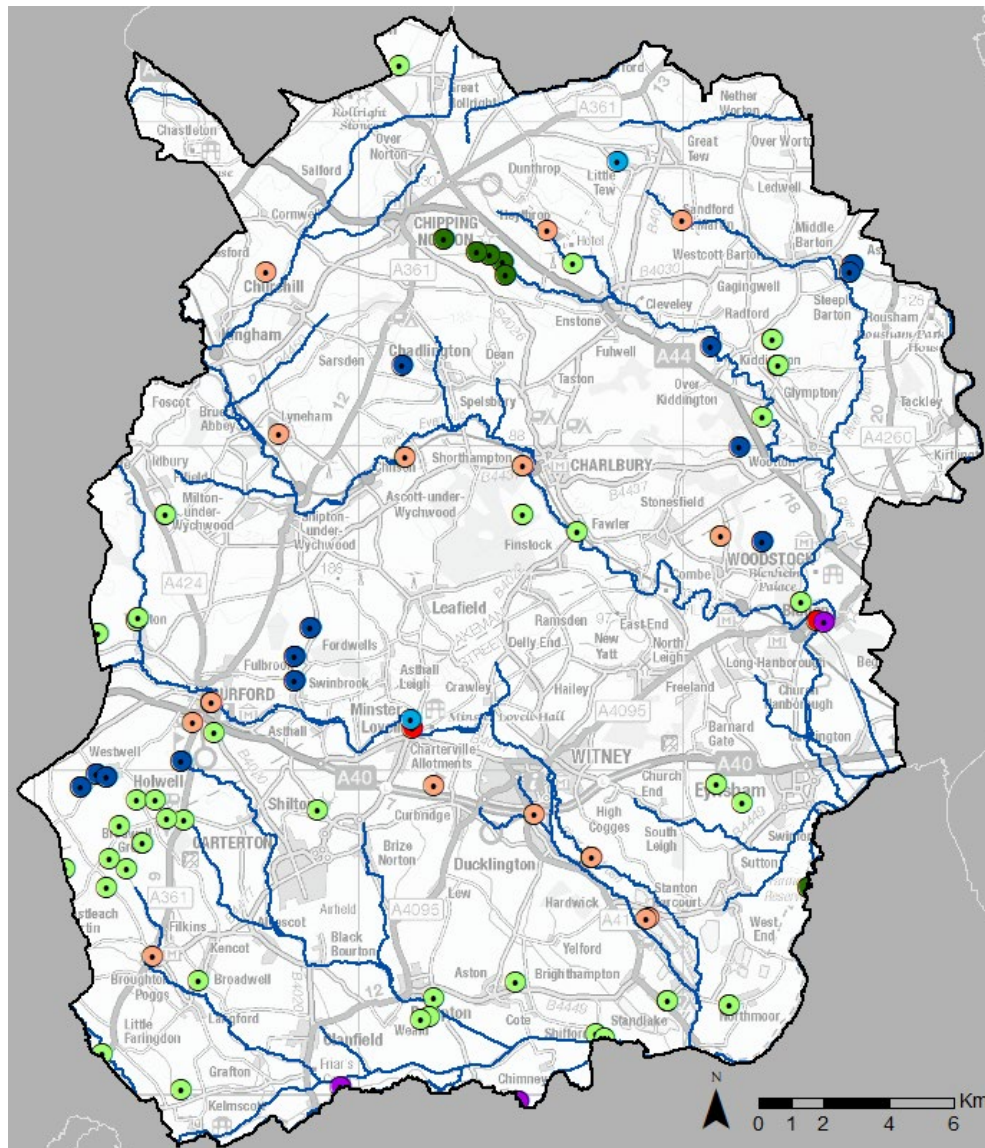
- Abstraction $>20\text{m}^3/\text{day}$ requires an abstraction licence
- We need to:
 - understand how much water is being taken from the environment
 - ensure there is justification for the amount of water being taken
 - ensure water is taken and used efficiently
 - have controls to manage resources sustainably

How do we licence?

- A primary consideration is the sustainability of abstraction.
- We use Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies to understand water resource pressures and availability:
 - Where water is available we may issue licences for abstraction with appropriate conditions.
 - Where water is limited we may issue a more restrictive licence, or may not issue a licence to ensure the environment is protected.
- We will consider local sensitive receptors (e.g. fish, designated sites) and wider impacts.
- This is set out in our Abstraction Licensing Strategies



West Oxfordshire Local Authority



Abstractions

- Agriculture
- Amenity
- Environmental
- Industrial, Commercial And Public Services
- Production Of Energy
- Private Water Supply
- Public Water Supply

Licence compliance

- We need to ensure abstraction is carried out sustainably.
- We carry out compliance checks to ensure abstractors:
 - Understand their licence and the conditions within
 - Are operating within the terms of their licence including the amount they abstract
 - Appropriately address their further needs for water
- Compliance checks are carried out regularly, but also on an *ad hoc* basis as required.



Recovering abstraction



- Abstraction has not always been managed as it currently is:
 - historic abstractions were brought into licensing
 - environmental pressures and understanding are changing and developing
- We work with licence holders to investigate unsustainable abstraction and put in place measures to manage or mitigate impacts
- We review modern licences on a rolling programme

Working with water companies

- As with other abstractors, we regulate abstraction by water companies.
- We have mechanisms such as the Water Industry National Environment Programme to help manage the investigation of, and measures to address and mitigate water company unsustainable abstraction.
- We review Water Resources Management Plans and drought plans and provide technical advice to Defra.

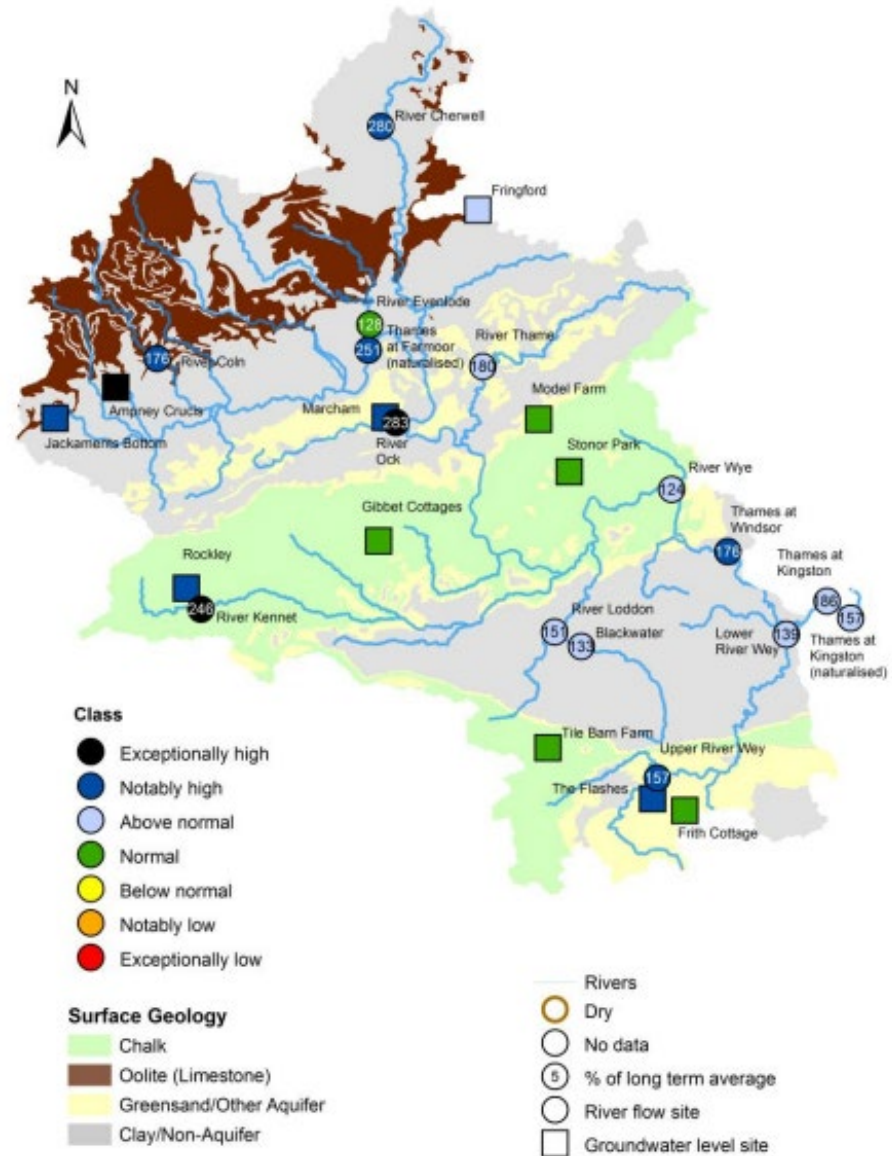


Planning for the future

- There is a need to plan for resilient supplies into the future while also improving our environment.
- Water demand and supply challenges become more acute into the future.
- The National Framework for Water Resources looks to address these challenges.
- Challenges are across all sectors, the most significant being public water supply - strategic Resource Options are selected regionally.

Managing drought

- The Environment Agency provides strategic oversight in drought. We:
 - Monitor
 - Report
 - Advise
 - Mitigate



How we can all help



- All our water comes from the environment.
- We can all help reduce the pressures on our environment with simple action.
- Find inspiration at:
 - **Waterwise** - Waterwise.org.uk
 - **Water's Worth Saving** - Watersworthsaving.org.uk

A large green circular graphic on the left side of the slide. Inside the circle is a white stylized figure with arms raised, surrounded by white cloud-like shapes.

Thank you