



Water Resources Act 1991

1991 CHAPTER 57

PART II

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER I

GENERAL MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

19 General management of resources by the [^{F1}Agency.]

- (1) It shall be the duty of the [^{F2}Agency] to take all such action as it may from time to time consider, in accordance (if any have been given for the purposes of this section) with the directions of the Secretary of State, to be necessary or expedient for the purpose—
- (a) of conserving, redistributing or otherwise augmenting water resources in England and Wales; and
 - (b) of securing the proper use of water resources in England and Wales.
- (2) Nothing in this section shall be construed as relieving any water undertaker of the obligation to develop water resources for the purpose of performing any duty imposed on it by virtue of section 37 of the ^{M1}Water Industry Act 1991 (general duty to maintain water supply system).

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 19 substituted (subject to other provisions of the amending Act) (1.4.1996) by 1995 c. 25, s. 120, **Sch. 22 para. 128** (with ss. 7(6), 115, 117); S.I. 1996/186, **art. 3**
- F2** Words in s. 19 substituted (subject to other provisions of the amending Act) (1.4.1996) by 1995 c. 25, s. 120, **Sch. 22 para. 128** (with ss. 7(6), 115, 117); S.I. 1996/186, **art. 3**

Marginal Citations

- M1** 1991 c. 56.

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20 Water resources management schemes.

- (1) It shall be the duty of the [^{F3}appropriate agency] so far as reasonably practicable to enter into and maintain such arrangements with water undertakers for securing the proper management or operation of—
- (a) the waters which are available to be used by water undertakers for the purposes of, or in connection with, the carrying out of their functions; and
 - (b) any reservoirs, apparatus or other works which belong to, are operated by or are otherwise under the control of water undertakers for the purposes of, or in connection with, the carrying out of their functions,
- as the [^{F3}appropriate agency] from time to time considers appropriate for the purpose of carrying out its functions under section 6(2) [^{F4}or, as the case may be, section 6(2A)] of the 1995 Act.
- (2) Without prejudice to the power of the [^{F3}appropriate agency] and any water undertaker to include any such provision as may be agreed between them in arrangements under this section, such arrangements may—
- (a) make provision by virtue of subsection (1)(a) above with respect to the construction or installation of any reservoirs, apparatus or other works which will be used by the undertaker in the carrying out of its functions;
 - (b) contain provision requiring payments to be made by the [^{F3}appropriate agency] to the undertaker; and
 - (c) require the reference to and determination by the Secretary of State or the [^{F5}Water Services Regulation Authority] of questions arising under the arrangements.
- (3) The [^{F3}appropriate agency] shall send a copy of any arrangements entered into by it under this section to the Secretary of State; and the obligations of a water undertaker by virtue of any such arrangements shall be enforceable under section 18 of the ^{M2}Water Industry Act 1991 (enforcement orders) by the Secretary of State.

Textual Amendments

- F3** Words in s. 20 substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\), art. 1\(2\), Sch. 2 para. 266\(2\)](#) (with Sch. 7)
- F4** Words in s. 20(1) inserted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\), art. 1\(2\), Sch. 2 para. 266\(3\)](#) (with Sch. 7)
- F5** Words in s. 20(2)(c) substituted (1.4.2006) by [Water Act 2003 \(c. 37\), s. 105\(3\), Sch. 7 para. 28\(2\); S.I. 2005/2714, art. 4\(f\)](#) (with Sch. para. 8)

Marginal Citations

- M2** 1991 c. 56

[^{F6}20A Water resources management schemes: other abstractors

- (1) The [^{F7}appropriate agency] may enter into and maintain such arrangements with holders of abstraction licences other than water undertakers for securing the proper management or operation of—
- (a) the waters from which they have the right by virtue of their licences to abstract water; and

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- (b) any reservoirs, apparatus or other works which are used for the purposes of or in connection with their abstractions and which belong to them, are operated by them or are otherwise under their control,
- as the [F7appropriate agency] from time to time considers appropriate for the purpose of carrying out its functions under section 6(2) [F8or, as the case may be, section 6(2A)] of the 1995 Act.
- (2) Without prejudice to the power of the [F7appropriate agency] and any holder of an abstraction licence to include any such provision as may be agreed between them in arrangements under this section, such arrangements may—
- (a) make provision by virtue of subsection (1)(a) above with respect to the construction or installation of any reservoirs, apparatus or other works which the holder of the licence will use for the purposes of or in connection with his abstraction;
- (b) contain provision requiring payments to be made by the [F7appropriate agency] to the holder of the licence; and
- (c) require the reference to and determination by the Secretary of State or the Water Services Regulation Authority of questions arising under the arrangements.
- (3) The [F7appropriate agency] shall send a copy of any arrangements entered into by it under this section to the Secretary of State.
- (4) In this section, references to abstraction licences are to licences under Chapter 2 of this Part to abstract water.]

Textual Amendments

- F6** S. 20A inserted (1.10.2004) by [Water Act 2003 \(c. 37\), ss. 28, 105\(3\)](#); S.I. 2004/2528, art. 2(b) (with [Sch. para. 8](#))
- F7** Words in s. 20A substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\), art. 1\(2\), Sch. 2 para. 266\(2\)](#) (with [Sch. 7](#))
- F8** Words in s. 20A(1) inserted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\), art. 1\(2\), Sch. 2 para. 266\(3\)](#) (with [Sch. 7](#))

[F920B Water resources management schemes: referral to Secretary of State

- (1) This section applies where—
- (a) the [F10appropriate agency] has sought to enter into arrangements acceptable to it under section 20 or 20A above, but is satisfied that the other party is unwilling to enter into such arrangements or to do so on terms appearing to the [F10appropriate agency] to be reasonable; or
- (b) having entered into such arrangements, the [F10appropriate agency] has sought to renew or vary them but is satisfied that the other party is unwilling to do so or to do so on terms appearing to the [F10appropriate agency] to be reasonable.
- (2) Where this section applies, the [F10appropriate agency] may refer to the Secretary of State the question (as the case may be)—
- (a) whether such arrangements should be entered into, and if so, on what terms; or
- (b) whether the arrangements should be renewed or varied (as the case may be), and if so, on what terms.

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- (3) If the Secretary of State determines that arrangements should be entered into or (as the case may be) renewed or varied, such arrangements on the terms determined by the Secretary of State shall be enforceable—
- (a) by civil proceedings by the Secretary of State for an injunction or for any other appropriate relief; and
 - (b) where the other party is a water undertaker, also under section 18 of the Water Industry Act 1991 (enforcement orders) by the Secretary of State.
- (4) The functions of the Secretary of State under subsection (2) above shall be treated for the purposes of section 114 of the 1995 Act (delegation or reference of appeals) as if they were functions to which paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of that section applied.]

Textual Amendments

- F9** S. 20B inserted (1.10.2004) by [Water Act 2003 \(c. 37\)](#), **ss. 29(1)**, 105(3); S.I. 2004/2528, art. 2(b) (with [Sch. para. 8](#))
- F10** Words in s. 20B substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 267** (with [Sch. 7](#))

[^{F11}20C Proposals for bulk supply arrangements

- (1) In the circumstances mentioned in subsection (2) below, the [^{F12}appropriate agency] may, in carrying out its functions under section 6(2) [^{F13}or, as the case may be, section 6(2A)] of the 1995 Act, propose to a qualifying person (within the meaning of section 40 of the Water Industry Act 1991) that he make an application under that section for a bulk supply of water from a water undertaker.
- (2) The circumstances referred to in subsection (1) above are that it appears to the [^{F12}appropriate agency] that such a bulk supply is necessary in order to secure the proper use of water resources.
- (3) The [^{F12}appropriate agency] shall not make such a proposal without first consulting the Water Services Regulation Authority.
- (4) The [^{F12}appropriate agency] may include in its proposal the period for which, and terms and conditions on which, the [^{F12}appropriate agency] considers it appropriate that the bulk supply should be given.]

Textual Amendments

- F11** S. 20C inserted (1.10.2004) by [Water Act 2003 \(c. 37\)](#), **ss. 31(1)**, 105(3); S.I. 2004/2528, art. 2(c) (with [Sch. para. 8](#))
- F12** Words in s. 20C substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 268(2)** (with [Sch. 7](#))
- F13** Words in s. 20C(1) inserted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 268(3)** (with [Sch. 7](#))

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21 Minimum acceptable flows.

- (1) The [^{F14}appropriate agency] may, if it thinks it appropriate to do so, submit a draft statement to the Secretary of State containing, in relation to any inland waters that are not discrete waters—
 - (a) provision for determining the minimum acceptable flow for those waters; or
 - (b) where any provision for determining such a flow is for the time being in force in relation to those waters, provision for amending that provision or for replacing it with different provision for determining the minimum acceptable flow for those waters.
- (2) The provision contained in any statement for determining the minimum acceptable flow for any inland waters shall, in relation to the inland waters to which it relates, set out—
 - (a) the control points at which the flow in the waters is to be measured;
 - (b) the method of measurement which is to be used at each control point; and
 - (c) the flow which is to be the minimum acceptable flow at each control point or, where appropriate, the flows which are to be the minimum acceptable flows at each such point for the different times or periods specified in the statement.
- (3) Before preparing so much of any draft statement under this section as relates to any particular inland waters, the [^{F14}appropriate agency] shall consult—
 - ^{F15}(za) if those waters are in Wales and there are related inland waters in England, the Agency;
 - (zb) if those waters are in England and there are related inland waters in Wales, the NRBW;]
 - (a) any water undertaker having the right to abstract water from those waters;
 - (b) any other water undertaker having the right to abstract water from any related underground strata;
 - (c) the drainage board for any internal drainage district from which water is discharged into those waters or in which any part of those waters is situated;
 - (d) any navigation authority, harbour authority or conservancy authority having functions in relation to those waters or any related inland waters;
 - (e) if those waters are ^{F16}... situated in Wales (or in an area of the sea adjoining either the coast of Wales or an area of sea forming part of Wales) and they or any related inland waters are tidal waters in relation to which there is no such navigation authority, harbour authority or conservancy authority, [^{F17}the Secretary of State for Transport]; and
 - (f) any person authorised by a licence under Part I of the ^{M3}Electricity Act 1989 to generate electricity [^{F18}who has a right to abstract water from those waters].
- (4) In determining the flow to be specified in relation to any inland waters under subsection (2)(c) above, the [^{F14}appropriate agency] shall have regard—
 - (a) to the flow of water in the inland waters from time to time;
 - (b) in the light of its duties under [^{F19}sections 6(1), 7 and 8 of the 1995 Act], to the character of the inland waters and their surroundings; and
 - (c) to any water quality objectives established under Chapter I of Part III of this Act in relation to the inland waters or any other inland waters which may be affected by the flow in the inland waters in question.
- (5) The flow specified in relation to any inland waters under subsection (2)(c) above shall be not less than the minimum which, in the opinion of the [^{F14}appropriate agency], is

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needed for safeguarding the public health and for meeting (in respect of both quantity and quality of water)—

- (a) the requirements of existing lawful uses of the inland waters, whether for agriculture, industry, water supply or other purposes; and
 - (b) the requirements, in relation to both those waters and other inland waters whose flow may be affected by changes in the flow of those waters, of navigation, fisheries or land drainage.
- (6) The provisions of Schedule 5 to this Act shall have effect with respect to draft statements under this section and with respect to the approval of statements submitted as draft statements.
- (7) The approval under Schedule 5 to this Act of a draft statement under this section shall bring into force, on the date specified in that approval, so much of that statement, as approved, as contains provision for determining, amending or replacing the minimum acceptable flow for any inland waters.
- (8) For the purposes of subsection (3) above—
- (a) underground strata are related underground strata in relation to any inland waters if—
 - (i) a water undertaker has a right to abstract water from the strata; and
 - (ii) it appears to the [^{F14}appropriate agency], having regard to the extent to which the level of water in the strata depends on the flow of those waters, that the exercise of that right may be substantially affected by so much of the draft statement in question as relates to those waters;
 - (b) inland waters are related inland waters in relation to any other inland waters, where it appears to the [^{F14}appropriate agency] that changes in the flow of the other waters may affect the flow of the first-mentioned inland waters.
- (9) For the purposes of subsection (5) above the [^{F14}appropriate agency] shall be entitled (but shall not be bound) to treat as lawful any existing use of any inland waters unless—
- (a) by a decision given in any legal proceedings, it has been held to be unlawful; and
 - (b) that decision has not been quashed or reversed;
- ^{F20}
- [^{F21}(10) In subsection (5) above, the reference to land drainage includes—
- (a) defence against water (including sea water), irrigation (other than spray irrigation), warping and the carrying on, for any purpose, of any other practice which involves management of the level of water in a watercourse; and
 - (b) the provision of flood warning systems.]

Textual Amendments

- F14** Words in s. 21 substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 269(2)** (with Sch. 7)
- F15** S. 21(3)(za)(zb) inserted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 269(3)(a)** (with Sch. 7)
- F16** Words in s. 21(3)(e) omitted (1.4.2013) by virtue of [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 269(3)(b)** (with Sch. 7)
- F17** Words in s. 21(3)(e) substituted (25.11.2002) by [S.I. 2002/2626](#), art. 20, **Sch. 2 para. 18(2)**

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- F18** Words in s. 21(3)(f) added (21.9.1995) by 1995 c. 25, s. 120(1), **Sch. 22 para. 133(1)** (with ss. 7(6), 115, 117); S.I. 1995/1983, **art. 3**
- F19** Words in s. 21(4)(b) substituted (1.4.1996) by 1995 c. 25, s. 120, **Sch. 22 para. 133(2)** (with ss. 7(6), 115, 117); S.I. 1996/186, **art. 3**
- F20** Words in s. 21(9) repealed (1.1.2018) by Water Act 2003 (c. 37), ss. 8(2)(a), 105(3), **Sch. 9 Pt. 1**; S.I. 2017/1043, **art. 2(c)(h)**
- F21** S. 21(10) added (1.1.2018) by Water Act 2003 (c. 37), **ss. 8(2)(b)**, 105(3); S.I. 2017/1043, **art. 2(c)**

Marginal Citations

- M3** 1989 c. 29.

22 Directions to the [^{F22}appropriate agency] to consider minimum acceptable flow.

- (1) If the [^{F22}appropriate agency] is directed by the Secretary of State to consider whether the minimum acceptable flow for any particular inland waters ought to be determined or reviewed, the [^{F22}appropriate agency] shall consider that matter as soon as reasonably practicable after being directed to do so.
- (2) After considering any matter under subsection (1) above the [^{F22}appropriate agency] shall submit to the Secretary of State with respect to the inland waters in question either—
- (a) such a draft statement as is mentioned in subsection (1) of section 21 above; or
 - (b) a draft statement that no minimum acceptable flow ought to be determined for those waters or, as the case may require, that the minimum acceptable flow for those waters does not need to be changed.
- and subsections (6) and (7) of that section shall apply in relation to a draft statement under this subsection as they apply in relation to a draft statement under that section.
- (3) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph 4 of Schedule 5 to this Act, the power of the Secretary of State under that paragraph to alter a draft statement before approving it shall include power to substitute a statement containing or amending any such provision as is mentioned in subsection (2) of section 21 above for such a draft statement as is mentioned in subsection (2)(b) of this section.

Textual Amendments

- F22** Words in s. 22 and heading substituted (1.4.2013) by The Natural Resources Body for Wales (Functions) Order 2013 (S.I. 2013/755), **art. 1(2)**, **Sch. 2 para. 270(a)** (with Sch. 7)

23 Minimum acceptable level or volume of inland waters.

- (1) Where it appears to the [^{F23}appropriate agency], in the case of any particular inland waters, that it would be appropriate to measure the level or the volume (either instead of or in addition to the flow) the [^{F23}appropriate agency] may determine that sections 21 and 22 above shall apply in relation to those inland waters as if any reference to the flow were or, as the case may be, included a reference to the level or to the volume.
- (2) Where the [^{F23}appropriate agency] makes a determination under subsection (1) above with respect to any inland waters, any draft statement prepared for the purposes of section 21 or 22 above, in so far as it relates to those waters, shall state—
- (a) whether the level or the volume is to be measured; and

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- (b) whether it is to be measured instead of, or in addition to, the flow.
- (3) Chapter II of this Part shall apply in relation to any inland waters with respect to which a determination has been made under subsection (1) above as if any reference in that Chapter to the flow were, or (as the case may be) included, a reference to the level or, as the case may be, the volume.

Textual Amendments

F23 Words in ss. 23, 24 substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 270(a)** (with Sch. 7)

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Water Resources Act 1991, CHAPTER I.