

Matter 3, Action 5

Policy DS2PU/MA-LP14 – review the evidence to support the higher National Housing Standard for water consumption, particularly in light of EA’s 2021 Assessment of Water Stress Areas Update.

United Utilities provided additional information in a letter dated 24th February together with their response to the Inspector’s MIQs for Matter 14 in support of their original request for the higher National Water Standard for water consumption to be included in policy.

The Council has reflected on this and while we think it provides a rationale for water consumption in the longer term over United Utilities’ area it does not make a compelling case for doing so in Copeland at this time.

This is because the pressure on water usage is associated with high population growth, but this will be most prevalent in places like Greater Manchester and Merseyside rather than Copeland. The water supply pressure for west Cumbria has diminished with the completion of the West Cumbria Pipeline connecting this area to the wider network at Thirlmere.

Also, the pressure is likely to come towards the end of the Plan period, so it is felt that it is better to keep the position under review and potentially introduce the higher requirement at a Plan review stage, especially given the relatively marginal viability on sites.

The Council feels that the criteria that encourage and enable water efficiency measures within Policy DS6 (Actions 140 and 141) are a more appropriate measure at this time.