



9 January 2026

## Thirlmere Reservoir - United Utilities' Licence Renewal Applications

### How you can get involved

We have received an application from United Utilities (UU) to renew their licences to abstract water at Thirlmere Reservoir. The public consultation for these applications is open from 9 January 2026 until 6 February 2026.

We manage water resources in the environment in a way that balances the needs of the environment and all water users. Organisations and people that want to abstract more than 20 cubic metres per day of water from the environment must apply to us for a licence. Many abstraction licences have got expiry dates. If the licence holder wishes to continue abstracting, they need to apply to us to renew them. This allows us to assess the impacts of the abstraction.

UU's 9 abstraction and transfer licences associated with the Thirlmere catchment expire, or have conditions that expire, on the 31 March 2026. UU has applied to us to renew all these licences on a like-for-like basis on the same terms. It has not applied to make any changes to the licences or to the maximum licensed amount of water it takes from Thirlmere.

UU does propose to make changes to water releases from the reservoir that help to protect the environment. These releases mitigate for water UU abstracts, for example by supporting fish migration and improving habitat quality.

UU is also proposing to stop the current water releases from the reservoir that help to manage flood risk. While these flood management releases are not part of UU's Thirlmere licences, UU's renewal applications take account of stopping these releases. UU has stated in their application it is committed to working together with the Environment Agency to develop a future forecast driven operating regime of water releases for Thirlmere

If UU's applications show it can sustainably abstract water from Thirlmere Reservoir, and that there would be enough water available for the needs of the environment, the local economy, the community and water users, we are likely to renew the abstraction licences.

We welcome comments from the community on these applications. We will assess consultation comments and UU's application documents before we decide whether to renew the licences.

#### The issues we can take account of include:

- Any likely impact on the environment and water users such as leisure or hobby groups or others with protected rights such as other abstractors.
- Sustainability concerns on water resources.



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- Social and economic impacts on surrounding communities from the abstractions.
- Flooding concerns caused by the abstraction or transfer of water at Thirlmere.

#### The issue we can't take account of:

We can't take account of comments that are not about these specific applications, including:

- General opinion on water company efficiency or operations.
- Changes to flood risk from UU stopping their flood management releases.

#### How you can view and comment on the application

You can view the applications and make your comments using our [on line consultation tool](#). You can also email your comments to us at [pscpublicresponse@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:pscpublicresponse@environment-agency.gov.uk).

All comments will be publicly available unless you request otherwise. Please note that we may still have to release your comments if required by law, such as if we receive an environmental information request asking for all consultation comments. Names and contact details are not included in any consultation comments made public.

Please call the Environment Agency's National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506 for advice about how to comment, or how to view a copy of the application documents, if you do not have online access.

All comments or questions on the applications must be in writing, usually through our consultation tool or by email.

We have redacted the application documents to remove any information that we consider would be a security risk to public water supplies if it was made public.

#### Next Steps

We will acknowledge that we have received your comments and questions, but we won't respond to the comments you have made in our acknowledgement. Once the consultation is closed, we will produce a decision document. This will include our decision, the reasons for it and our response to consultation comments. We group similar consultation comments together and respond once in the document. We will contact everyone who has submitted consultation comments to let them know our decision and how they can view our decision document.

Our consultation must be fair and transparent. This requires everyone to have the same information on which to comment. We cannot enter into detailed discussions or correspondence with an individual on an application during the consultation process as this would mean they had information not available to others.

If you have any questions about the consultation process, please contact us at [Inforequests.cmlnc@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Inforequests.cmlnc@environment-agency.gov.uk)



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