

RESPONSE TO OFWAT CONSULTATION JUNE 2023

Leeds City Council is supportive of measures to reduce water consumption in new development and to protect water quality through the introduction of sustainable drainage measures. To this effect we have adopted planning policies in our Local Plan to require all major planning applications for residential development to include measures to ensure that a low water consumption standard is met and to require measures to improve overall water efficiency, such as through the use of sustainable drainage systems and rain water harvesting.

The Government's guidance on optional technical standards states that a local planning authority may consider whether a tighter water efficiency requirement for new homes is justified to help manage demand. The tighter optional standard within building regulations for water consumption is 110 litres per person per day. Leeds City Council collated evidence on the demand in our area and justified the tighter standard to an independent inspector through the examination of its Local Plan.

Since 2019 this standard has applied to all applications for major development in the Leeds District. Our monitoring shows that this standard has been readily accepted by house builders leading to a saving in water of 102,000 litres for the period from 1 October 2019 to 30 June 2020.

Given the droughts and climate change forecasts there is enough evidence that the whole country needs to use water wisely. Our experience of implementing a tighter water efficiency standard in new development is that developers are usually happy to do it, it's not especially challenging or costly. Therefore Leeds City Council would like to encourage the inclusion of tighter water efficiency standards in the building regulations. There should be a standard of water consumption for all new development nationally rather than offering incentives to developers for them to do better. This would also save local authorities time and resources in preparing and justifying local plan policies and taking them through examination through the plan making system.