

Subject:
Report on the Public Water Supply in
Rossendale in 2006

Status: For Publication

Report to: Performance Scrutiny **Date:** 21 November 2007
Committee

Report of: Head of Street Scene and Neighbourhood Services

**Portfolio
Holder:** A Clean and Green Rossendale

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Report to inform members of quality and sufficiency of the Public Water Supply in Rossendale

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 Health and Wellbeing – where residents can look forward to a long and healthy life

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

4. BACKGROUND/REASON FOR REPORT

- 4.1 A public water supply is one provided by a statutorily appointed company. In Rossendale, as in the whole of the North West this is provided by United Utilities. Local Authorities such as Rossendale BC are not the regulatory body for public water supplies. However the Council does have a duty under legislation to make arrangements with the water company to ensure the Council is informed of water quality and supply in relation to public health.
- 4.2 United Utilities undertake extensive sampling of the water supply in Rossendale against a list of prescribed parameters. The company reports on a monthly and also an annual basis to the Local Authority on water quality, sampling results, sufficiency of supply and any actions or works being planned or undertaken.

There are also annual liaison meetings between the Local Authority and United Utilities.

4.3 The Regulation of Public Water Supplies

The framework is set out in the Water Industry Act 1991 as amended by the Water Act 2003. The Chief Inspector of Drinking Water is appointed to enforce the regulatory framework and the Drinking Water Inspectorate provides independent reassurance that the public water supplies are safe and sufficient. In addition to this, the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations came in force in 2004 and have imposed new and tighter controls which specify when, where and what samples are to be taken, what records have to be kept and what action has to be taken if standards are not met.

The Water Company has to keep a Drinking Water Register which keeps customers informed about their water supply, set out in zones. Customer enquires and complaints about the supply in their area are dealt with United Utilities.

4.4 Reports and Liaison with the Rossendale Borough Council

Annual Report

Each year United Utilities have to supply Rossendale Council with information concerning the general quality of the water supplied during the year. This information has to be received by the 30th June each year and is usually in the form of a report and includes information on the results of sampling and also details of any Enforcement Orders (which specify steps which must be taken by the water company), Undertakings (which are written commitments which set out action to be taken where regulations have not been met) and Notices (which require the water company to take measures where the regulations are in danger of not being met).

Monthly Reports

In addition monthly reports of sampling are received which are a summary of the water quality for that month and are usually received by the Principal Environmental Health Officer (EHO) (Food Safety) in electronic form. These reports also go to the Drinking Water Inspectorate who investigate any non conformances.

Maps

United Utilities have supplied Rossendale with maps of the Water Supply Zones and Service Reservoirs in the Borough. The zones are defined each year and in 2006 there were 8 water supply zones, supplied through 17 service reservoirs.

Annual Liaison meetings

Each year United Utilities arrange a liaison meeting between themselves, the Health Protection Agency and the local authorities in the North West. This meeting is attended by the Principal EHO (Food Safety).

Disconnection notices

United Utilities inform the Environmental Health Service of any food businesses it disconnects so that we can take action to ensure there is no risk to health.

Emergency procedures

United Utilities have an emergency procedure for use in the event of bacteriological failures. The procedure is known as QP40. If this happens they contact the Drinking Water Inspectorate, the Health Protection Agency and ourselves. The Health Protection Agency will cascade to the Primary Care Trust who will work with ourselves and United Utilities at local level. United Utilities will increase sampling, carry out works necessary and may impose a boil notice. In the case of chemical failures United Utilities initiate QP41 and in the event of no water the company is legally bound to supply 10 litres of water per head per day. This is done using tanks, bowsers or bottled water.

4.5 Quality of water supply in Rossendale in 2006

United Utilities take regulatory water quality samples from the 10 water treatment works supplying the 8 water supply zones in Rossendale, from the 17 service reservoirs supplying Rossendale and from consumer taps.

Drinking Water Quality is measured in terms of the Water Supply Zones containing an average of 15,000 customers and is calculated as a mean zonal compliance in % for 40 parameters which gives a broad measure of compliance.

In Rossendale in 2006 results of sampling showed the rate of compliance at 100% for five out of eight water supply zones. The three other zones had a compliance rate of 99.43%, 99.71% and 99.28%.

The company report shows that the drinking water quality in Rossendale is good.

4.6 Sufficiency of the Public Water Supply in Rossendale

The average demand for water in Rossendale in 2006 was 17 million litres per day. Rossendale is connected to United Utilities network of large diameter trunk mains that supplies 95% of the North West population. It is the largest integrated supply network in Europe. There are large reservoir sources in the Lake District and North Wales and this means that United Utilities can move water around the region as required. This flexibility ensures that supplies are maintained throughout the year.

4.7 Leakage

Leakage targets are agreed with Ofwat at company level. In the 12 months to March 2007 leakages were less than target level.

6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications for the Council

7. COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY SERVICES

7.1 This report has no specific legal implications.

8. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

8.1 This report has no human resources implications

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 In 2006 England's water quality showed a high rate of compliance at 99.94%. The Company's report shows that the drinking water quality in Rossendale is good for samples taken in supply zones in 2006.

9.2 The Environmental Health Service is satisfied with the quality and sufficiency of supply of the public drinking water in Rossendale and with the arrangements in place with United Utilities whereby officers are informed if problems do occur.

9.3 Links between the water company and Rossendale have never been stronger due to recent work by the Environmental Health Service to ensure officers are kept informed. By reviewing arrangements with United Utilities and ensuring lines of communication are kept open both parties are aware of their responsibilities regarding this arrangement.

10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 That members note the quality and sufficiency of the public water supply in Rossendale

10.2 That the department continues to monitor and report on the supply of water in Rossendale.

11. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

11.1 United Utilities, Drinking Water Inspectorate

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
United Utilities Local Authority Report for Rossendale Report of the Drinking Water Inspector Letter form United Utilities dated 30 th August 2007	Stubbylee Hall Stubbylee Hall Stubbylee Hall