



Waterwise response to the Mayor of London's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

April 2010

Waterwise is an independent, not for profit, non-governmental organisation focused on decreasing water consumption in the UK and building the evidence base for large-scale water efficiency. Waterwise is the leading authority on water efficiency in the UK. In England, Waterwise sat on the UK Environment Minister's Water Saving Group alongside the water industry and regulators, for which it produced, in October 2008, the Evidence Base for Large-scale Water Efficiency in Homes.

Overview

Waterwise wholeheartedly welcomes the water efficiency measures set out in the Mayor of London's Adaptation Strategy.

Water efficiency is unique in that it has an important role to play in both adaptation to and tackling climate change.

London is classified by the Environment Agency as under serious water stress, with population density is high and water is scarcer than anywhere else in England and Wales. There is actually less water available per person in this region than in many Mediterranean countries. So we know that in coming years less water will need to go further in London – and every sector of the economy is dependent on water.

In addition, 5% of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions come from heating water in homes for cooking, bathing and cleaning, and the water industry makes up about 1% of total UK emissions through its pumping and treating of water and wastewater – so wasting less hot and cold water will reduce emissions.

Organisations can save up to 40% on their water bills through simple measures such as fixing leaks (after identifying these through meters) and switching to technologies such as urinals, toilets, taps and showers which use vastly smaller amounts of water. Water audits carried out as part of a wider water-use strategy should be one of the first steps an organisation should take in its adaptation plans. However, the plans of many business and public sector organisations for adapting to climate change – including those published recently by government departments – often overlook the important of water efficiency in

adaptation planning. In addition, where water availability is considered, costly solutions are sometimes being considered and taken forward before simple measures to waste less water have been exhausted.

In this context, Waterwise is delighted at the range of water efficiency measures set out in the Mayor of London's Adaptation Strategy. Indeed, we are using it as an example of best practice in our discussions with other organisations and policymakers.

Waterwise specifically welcomes:

- The study of water neutrality for London - a planning tool which Waterwise supports
- The proposal that Ofwat should place more emphasis on encouraging water efficiency – Ofwat has made considerable progress on encouraging water efficiency in recent years, and we are now working with them as they reconsider the incentives framework for the water industry in the context of climate change and other long-term challenges
- Retrofitting London homes for water and energy efficiency – a groundbreaking scheme which Waterwise is proud to partner
- Water metering of all properties in London
- Improving water efficiency standards in new development – building to a level of 105 litres per person per day
- Helping change consumer behaviour to waste less water
- Engaging with business organisations
- Improving the water efficiency of public and commercial buildings in London – we look forward to the detail of this work.

Finally, the Mayor states his intention to work with the insurance sector to encourage climate-resilient measures – Waterwise believes that this should cover water efficiency measures as well as flood risk management.

Waterwise applauds the Mayor of London and his team for the water efficiency measures set out in the Adaptation Strategy. We look forward to the Water Strategy later this year.

Nicci Russell

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