

Report part 1: Background Information

This essay sets out to provide five recommendations to *regional governance* on improving water security in the Test and Itchen Management Catchment. It investigates the management catchment for key stakeholders that must be considered in making recommendations, the system and subsystems at play in the region and their interactions, what lessons can be learnt from the current initiatives to improve water security, any knock on effects from interventions, and views the recommendations through a net-zero lens to assess their environmental impact.

The United Kingdom's Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has divided England into ten River Basin districts, generally relating to their geographical location. One of these is the South East district, which itself has 12 Management Catchments defined within it[1]. This way of dividing England's water supply is the result of the Catchment Based Approach[2], enabling on "locally focussed decision making and action," supporting existing river basin management planning. This approach defines a catchment as "A geographic area defined naturally by surface water hydrology.[W]e have adopted the definition of Management Catchments that the Environment Agency uses..."

One of these management catchments is the Test and Itchen Management Catchment, defined by the Environment Agency for water abstraction licensing[3] as the catchments of both the River Test and the River Itchen in Hampshire (see figure 1). The management catchment is predominantly rural, comprising around 1760 km^2 of Hampshire. The Test and Itchen are chalk streams, drawing flow from the groundwater along the northern section of the management catchment.[4] Both of the rivers have been declared Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for their biodiversity[5][6], and the Itchen has been declared a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for the presence of rare fauna [7]. The River Test runs from its source in Ashe to Southampton Water where it meets the Solent, flowing to the west of Southampton. The River Itchen runs from its source south of New Alresford to Southampton Water, flowing to the east of Southampton.

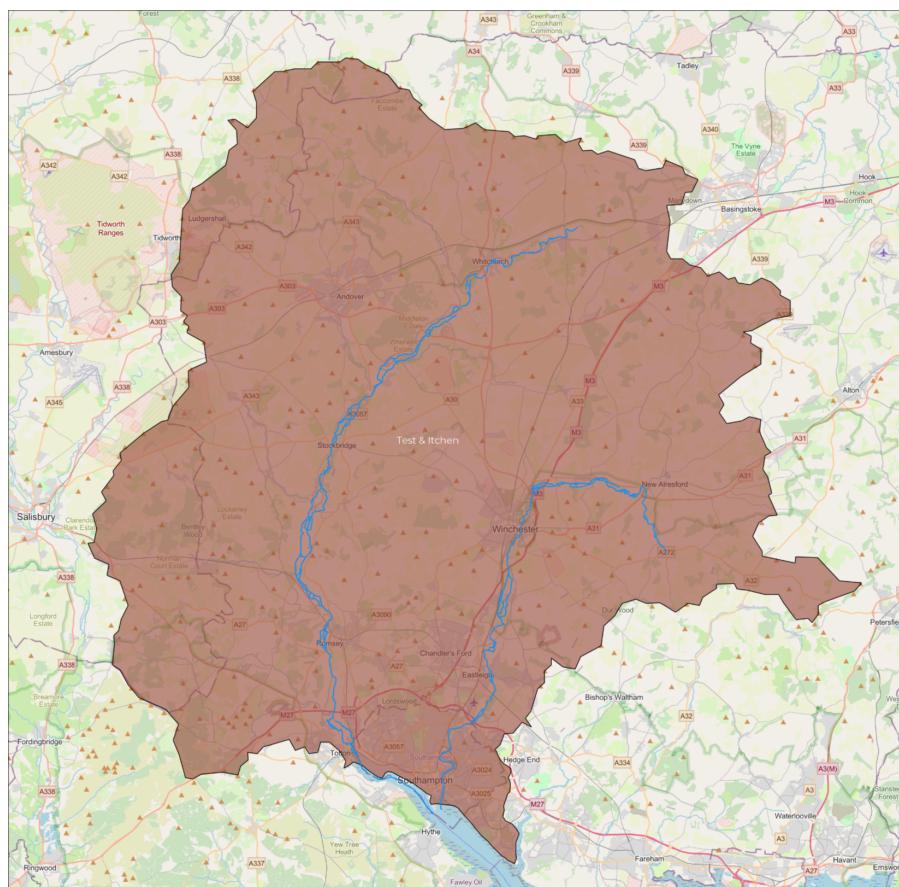


Figure 1: Map of the Test and Itchen Management Catchment[8].

The rivers serve as a major source of public water for Hampshire, with water being distributed throughout

the management catchment as well as to other parts of Hampshire and to the Isle of Wight[4]. The majority of public water in the area is supplied by Southern Water with small sections of the management catchment being served by South West Water, Wessex Water, Thames Water, and South East Water[9] (see figure 2). Additionally, the management catchment encompasses four large settlements: The cities of Southampton and Winchester, and the Towns of Andover and Eastleigh.

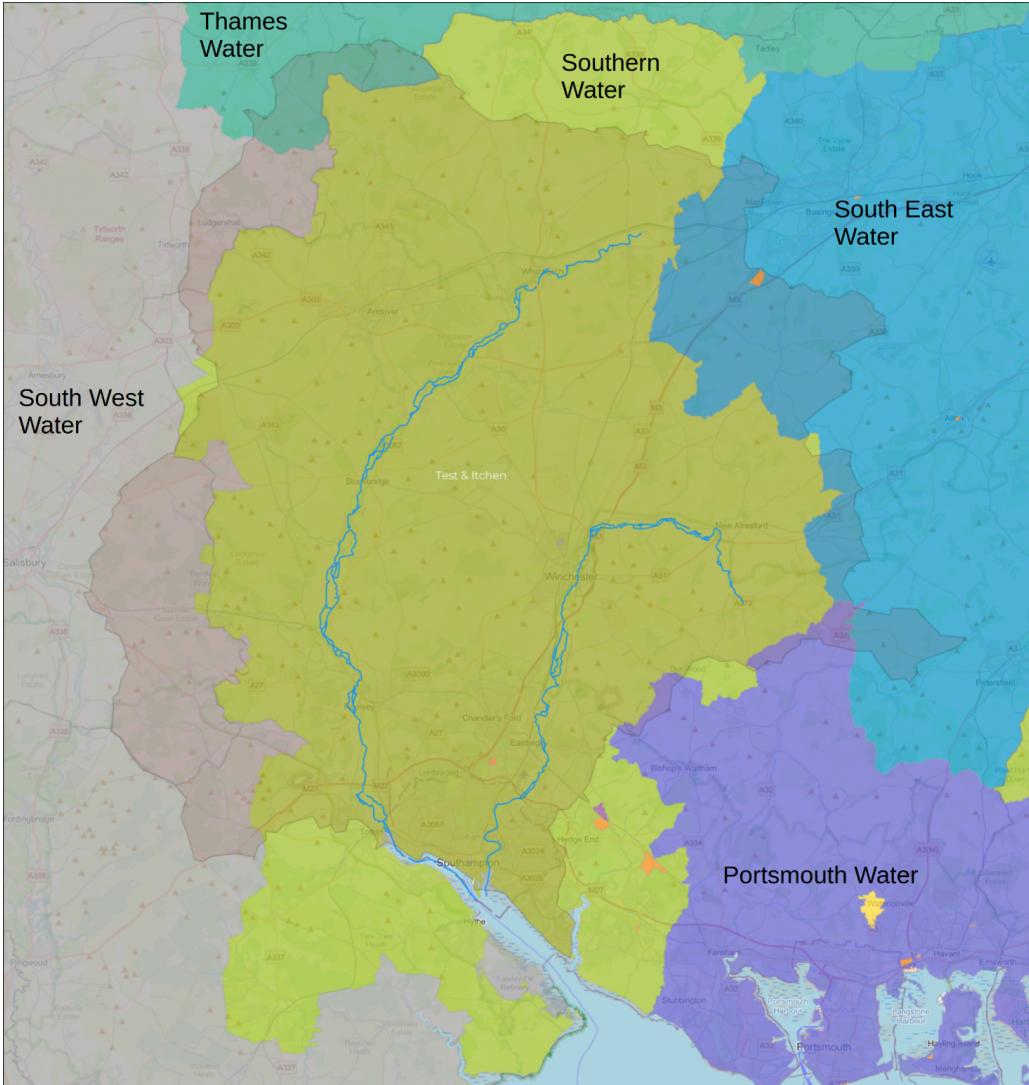


Figure 2: Map of the Test and Itchen Management Catchment, with Water Company shown [8].

Water availability and reliability in the Management Catchment are reported in the Environment Agency's Abstraction Licensing Strategy (ALS)[3], which dictates where individuals and organisations are granted licenses to abstract water from the rivers or groundwater. It shows that from 18 test points along the Test and Itchen that 50% (Q50) of the time, water is available in the majority of the catchment along the Test, but that along most of the Itchen and in Andover only restricted water is available (see figure 3a). Across the whole catchment worsens to no water available along the Itchen and in Andover, and restricted water available along the rest of the Test when the flow is at levels exceeded 95% of the time (Q95)(see figure 3b). This has resulted in water being unavailable for licensing along the Itchen in its entirety, and restricted water available for licensing along the Test. Additionally, the abstraction licenses held by Portsmouth Water and Southern Water were reviewed in 2011 and 2019 respectively to improve availability along the Itchen. In Southern Water's case, a "Reduction in annual and daily quantity" was made. Additionally, conditions on minimum flow through Environment Agency gauging stations have been introduced, with the minimum flow increasing for 10 months of the year from 2027[10]

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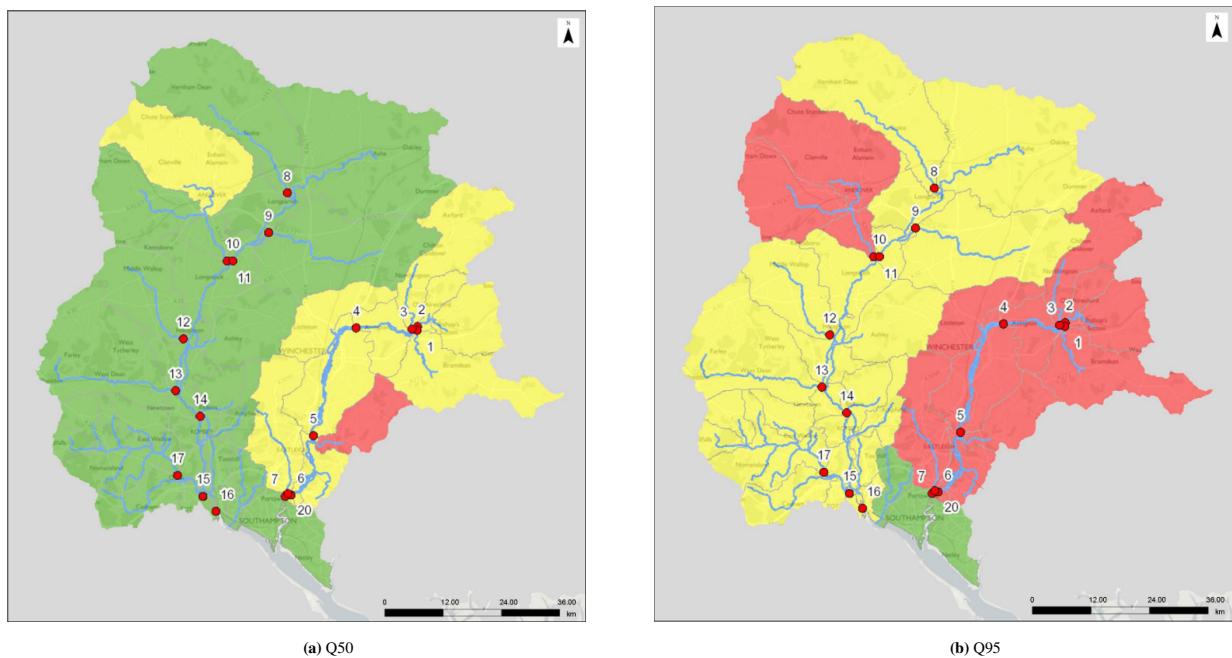


Figure 3: Water resource availability colours at Q50 and Q95 for Test and Itchen ALS. Green: Water Available; Yellow: Restricted Water Available; Red: No Water Available.[3]

Report part 2: Assumptions

The following assumptions are made in the analysis to bound the problem space:

1. It is assumed that the needs and impacts of the various independant water companies that operate in the management catchment area, or otherwise abstract water from the Rivers Test and Itchen, are negligible compared to that of Southern Water and Portsmouth Water
2. It is assumed that the needs of areas outside of the management catchment (e.g. the Isle of Wight) remain static and can be modelled as constants.
3. It is assumed that stakeholders respect local authorities, regulators, and other organisations
4. It is assumed that shareholders in public water companies would not unreasonably withhold funding from them, and are not operating these companies illegally
5. The debt held by public water companies is ignored

Report part 3a: Criteria for Method Selection

1. Worldview - Positivist or Constructivist?
2. Data availability
3. Accessibility - of method
4. Output Relevance - Not just question but general insight
5. Question Relevance - Does this answer the question?
6. Development - Does it develop output of another method?
7. Facilitaiton - Does it enable another method?
8. Supporting Literature - Is it backed up?
9. Maturity - Is it established?
10. Flexibility - Can I make it fit?
11. Redundance - Is it already covered?

To decide on the systems thinking methods that will answer the questions set out in part 4, eleven criteria have been derived that various methods will be tested against in part 3b. Methods will be given numerical scores for each of these criteria, and those with the highest scores will be selected.

Firstly, what is the worldview that the method leans towards? This paper aims to take a mixed-method approach, meaning a spread of positivist and constructivist worldviews (and thus quantitative and qualitative methods) is desired.

What is the availability of the data that the method requires? Some methods require difficult-to-obtain information to give useful insight or to use the method entirely. Any method to be selected must be usable with publicly-available information, or with information available in academic databases. No method should require commercially sensitive information, or insight from an insider in any of the stakeholder organisations. A method that can be performed with public information but would offer better insight with less accessible infomormation are still viable, though will be penalised against those that are insightful with accessible data.

What is the accessibility of the method? A large number of methods can be performed with a pencil and paper or with a tool in a free digital office suite. Some may require tools only present in commercial office suites, and some require dedicated tools to perform. Methods will be graded on if the tools they require are expensive, difficult to learn, the availability of alternatives (e.g. free and open source software), and whether the tool locks certain options behind a paid license. The time taken to complete the method will also be considered; some methods will take a matter of minutes to produce useful insight, whereas some may take hours or days to be useful. A shorter method will generally be considered more viable.

What is the relevance of the output to the research as a whole? Methods will output data or insight that will be of varying use to this investigation. Some data will be directly applicable to the research questions in part 4, whereas some will be best used as starting points or supporting information to other methods. Methods will thus be selected against their overall pertinence.

What is the relevance of the output to the research question(s)? Whilst methods will be considered in their overall relevance, some methods will produce insight that directly helps to answer one or more of the research questions. These methods will be favoured over those that are not directly applicable but may offer insight that supports these direct methods.

Does the method support the output of another method? Some methods will be able to reinforce or even challenge the findings of other methods. Whilst not neccesarily being the most useful method to answer a question, its outputs build the credibility of other findings and thus the recommendations that come out of them.

Does the method's outputs improve or entirely enable another method? Some methods may require the findings from another method as inputs. Others may find they can be used in isolation, but are more useful when using information gatherd from another methods. Enabling or improving another method will result in a higher score.

Is the method based on good supporting literature? Systems thinking methods are normally introduced in academic journal articles, or by individuals that use them in their work (e.g. consultancy). Methods will be judged on the quality of their foundational material.

How mature is the method? Having a large body of evidence where the method has been used gives credence to the method and its usefulness. It also can improve the quality of its finding, as the evidence can be used as example implementations of the method and may highlight best practice in application. Additionally, methods will sometimes undergo revision in response to feedback from practitioners and participants, which improve their viability. Methods that are mature, have been used often, and have been revised will be preferred.

How flexible is the method to this area of research? Many different disciplines use systems thinking techniques, from healthcare to aviation. Moreover, techniques are often tailored towards different tasks, such as risk management or accident investigation. Methods will be judged on how easily they can be adapted to fit this paper's specific requirements: exploring a problem space, targeting specific areas of that space, or ideation of solutions to these problems. Methods that fit well without adaptation will be given the maximum score.

Is the method covered in its entirety by one or more methods, or does it do the work of multiple methods? Some methods will provide similar insights to other methods, and some will cover the same ground as multiple other methods. Redundant methods will be penalised, and methods that make multiple others redundant will be preferred to reduce complexity.

Report part 3b: Method Selection

- Rich Picture
- Pig Diagram
- CATWOE
- Systemigram
- CLD
- System Dynamics
- Iceberg Model
- N^2
- Cynefin
- RMF
- HTA
- Accimap
- EAST-BL
- SPTA
- VSM

Report part 4: Application of methods and recommendations

To produce the five recommendations, this paper considers six research questions whose answers will inform the recommendations.

1. What key stakeholders are in the Test and Itchen Management Catchment, and what are their worldviews?
2. What subsystems are present in the system, and how do they interact with each other?
3. What elements of the system are most sensitive to intervention?
4. How effective are current initiatives at improving water security, and what can be learnt from them?
5. What negative consequences are likely from interventions in sensitive areas?
6. What are the greenhouse gas emitters in the system and in current initiatives, and how can they be mitigated?

Report part 5: Ethics

Report part 6: Statement of Quality

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