

Determination report

Licence number: WA/057/0031/002

Application reference number: PAN-032239

The Royal Mint, Llantrisant

Report of an application for a different terms renewal of full abstraction licence number WA/057/0031/002.

Purpose of this document

This determination report:

- explains how the application has been determined
- provides a record of the decision-making process
- shows how all relevant factors have been taken into account
- justifies any further conditions in the licence other than those applied as standard.

Unless the determination report specifies otherwise we have accepted the applicant's proposals.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has decided to grant the different-terms renewal to the licence.

We consider that in reaching this decision, we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the licence will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

A glossary of acronyms used can be found at the end of this document in [Annex 2](#).

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1. Summary of the proposal

The applicant, The Royal Mint Limited are the United Kingdoms official coin maker, producing currency for the UK. The site at Llantrisant has been abstracting water from the for use in their manufacturing processes since 1967 when the activity operated under a Crown Exemption. However, in 2009, their Crown Exemption was lost when they were vested into a Government owned public limited company, abstraction licence WA/057/0031/002 was subsequently issued in 2010 authorising abstraction from the River Ely at National Grid Reference ST 02990 84652 via means of two pumps with a combined capacity of 37.5 litres per second, however only one pump can be operated at a time, the second is configured for standby. This arrangement prevents the combined pump capacity from exceeding the proposed 20.8 l/s maximum instantaneous abstraction rate.

The applicant has applied for a different terms renewal of their licence to reflect a change in business operations. The site no longer manufactures international currency, resulting in a significant reduction in its water requirements.

Consequently, the application received was to reduce the authorised daily and annual abstraction quantities following the decommissioning of on-site furnaces, which previously required process water for cooling purposes. The reduction in licence abstraction quantities are as follows 410 cubic metres per day and 149,650 cubic metres per year.

Historically, this process water was used for non-contact cooling and subsequently discharged back to the River Ely approximately 500 metres downstream of the abstraction point.

The return of abstracted water has been authorised by EPR Permit KP3135KV.

Site operations now only require process water to be used operationally in the coin manufacturing process before being treated by an onsite treatment plant prior to discharge to sewer under a trade effluent consent. As a result, the licence is to become wholly consumptive, removing the requirement for discharge back to the River Ely downstream.

2. Application details

Administrative details	
Applicant name and address	The Royal Mint Limited The Royal Mint, Llantrisant, Pontyclun, CF72 8YT
Existing licence number	WA/057/0031/002 (referred to WA/057/0031/002/R001 on licence document)
New licence number	WA/057/0031/002 (referred to WA/057/0031/002/R002 on licence document)
Hydrometric sub-catchment	0031: Ely

Departures from application forms	
Aspect of application	New value applied for
Application type	Different terms renewal
Licence expiry date	31/03/2041
Hourly abstraction quantity	75 cubic metres per hour
Daily abstraction quantity	410 cubic metres per day
Annual abstraction quantity	149,650 cubic metres per year

Any differences between what was applied for within the initial application and what was subsequently agreed as the application details have been communicated to the applicant.

3. Validation of the application and further information received during determination

The application was validated on 15/04/2026. This means we considered it was submitted on the correct form, the correct application fee has been received and that the application contained sufficient information for us to begin our determination.

Entitlement to apply

The applicant has demonstrated that they are entitled to apply for the abstraction licence, as they have, or will have when the licence takes effect, a right of access to the abstraction point.

4. Advertising

NRW has decided to dispense with the need for advertising under Regulation 7(4) of the Water Resources (Abstraction and Impounding) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/641).

A dispensation notice was signed on 04/06/2026 by an authorised person and saved to the public register. Notice of this proposal has not been published; consequently no external representations from the general public can be made or considered. No statutory bodies have been notified because the proposal is not subject to advertising.

5. Justification of requirements and water efficiency

Abstraction records submitted by the applicant for the period 2020 to 2025 showed that, between 2020 and 2024, abstraction quantities were significantly less than the licenced annual licenced quantity, averaging 37.8% of their annual licenced quantity. Abstraction further reduced in 2025, with less than 5% of the annual licenced quantity being utilised. This reduction is consistent with the decommissioning of onsite furnaces and a low currency production year.

The applicant proposes to renew their licence with reduced daily and annual licenced quantities to 410 cubic metres per day and 149,650 cubic metres per year to align with their current site operations. The existing authorised hourly abstraction rate is to be retained to provide operational flexibility. The 2025 abstraction data and the applicants forecasted abstraction for 2026 indicate that the reduction is reasonable while also providing a headroom of approximately 20% above their forecasted abstraction quantities. This will ensure the applicant can continue with their operations with sufficient additional water should it be required to accommodate future operational needs and any increase in production volumes.

NRW have assessed the applicant's justification of requirements and have deemed them reasonable. The applicant will be advised to continue to review their water needs, and consider future reductions in licenced quantities if required.

Water efficiency

Natural Resources Wales have reviewed the measures provided by the applicant and consider that they are satisfactory to ensure that water is used efficiently.

6. Consultation

It was not necessary to consult with external bodies, because the proposal is not subject to advertising.

7. Technical assessment of the proposal

This proposal has been screened for potential impacts to the water environment, which includes designated sites, protected species, protected rights and lawful users.

7.1 Resource assessment and Abstraction Licensing Strategy (ALS)

The abstraction is within NRW's South East Valleys Abstraction Licensing Strategy (ALS) area. According to the ALS, there is water available for licensing at this location.

The ALS states that for existing licences flow restrictions apply when a Licence Holder formally applies to increase the permitted abstraction volume. As the application received is for a reduction in permitted licenced quantities and there have been no environmental concerns raised, the addition of a Hands-off flow condition on the licence was not deemed necessary.

7.2 Hydrology and/or hydrogeology

The abstraction is located on the River Ely watercourse, located in the Ely catchment. The River Ely flows approximately 30 kilometres downstream before discharging into Cardiff Bay.

At the point of abstraction, the proposed maximum daily abstraction of 410 cubic metres represents approximately 0.04% of the River Ely Q95 flow, indicating that the volume abstracted is negligible in comparison to low-flow conditions in the watercourse.

7.3 Impact on groundwater

Not applicable as this application is for a surface water abstraction with no identified impacts to groundwater.

7.4 Impact on surface water flows

There are no concerns regarding the impact on flows as a result of the proposed abstraction.

As the renewed licence includes a reduction to licenced abstraction quantities, it is considered likely to provide an improvement to surface water flows when compared with the abstraction quantities currently authorised under the existing licence.

The renewed licence also removes the existing discharge condition. However, any impacts arising from this are considered negligible, as the abstraction has historically

been partially consumptive, the only discharge authorised to surface water previously were uncontaminated surface run off and non-contact (uncontaminated) cooling water.

7.5 Impact on ecology

Note that impacts to ecological features within designated sites can be found in section 7.8

7.5.1 Impacts on fisheries

There are no anticipated impacts to fisheries as a result of this proposal.

The renewed licence includes a reduction in the licenced abstraction quantities, meaning a greater volume of water will be retained in the River Ely in comparison to the volumes authorised under the previous licence.

A fish pass is located immediately downstream for the point of abstraction. A reduction in abstraction quantities will result in greater flows over the fish pass. However, no adverse effects on the operation of functionality of the fish pass are anticipated as a result of the renewal proposal.

Fish screening condition 9.2 and 9.3 have been retained on the renewed licence to prevent harm to fish species within the watercourse.

7.5.2 Impacts on other water dependent species and habitats

There are no anticipated impacts to water dependent species or habitats as a result of this proposal. The proposal is a reduction in permitted abstraction quantities therefore more flows are to be retained River Ely than previously authorised.

7.6 Impact on water quality

There are no anticipated impacts to water quality as a result of this proposal. The reduction in licenced quantities is a betterment to the existing activity.

7.7. Protected rights and lawful users

No protected rights have been identified as being at risk of derogation as a result of this proposal.

7.8 Conservation impacts – Designated sites

7.8.1 The National Site Network and Ramsars:

The following National Site Network sites and Ramsars have been identified as at risk as a result of this proposal:

- The Severn Estuary SAC
- The Severn Estuary RAMSAR
- The Severn Estuary SPA

A Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required for the Severn Estuary SPA because there is no conceivable impact pathway to the site, by virtue of the scale or location or nature of the project.

A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) was completed to assess the potential of the proposed abstraction to affect the Severn Estuary SAC and RAMSAR sites identified. The project was screened for likelihood of significant effects and, taking account of the advice received from NRW's protected sites advisors, is considered not likely to have a significant effect on any National Site Network site (as documented in section 3.2 of OGN 200 Form 1).

The Habitats Regulations Assessment is available to view on the public register.

7.8.2 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The following sites were identified within the potential impact pathway of the proposal:

- Rhos Tonyrefail SSSI
- Ely Valley SSSI
- Cwm Cydfin, Leckwith SSSI
- Severn Estuary SSSI

This activity was assessed under the CRow Act by the Environment Agency when the original licence was granted, document dated 20/01/2010. The assessment concluded that the activity will have no impact on the Rhos Tonyrefail SSSI and the Ely Valley SSSI. Natural Resources Wales has concluded that renewing the licence with reduced permitted abstraction quantities does not introduce any new risk of adverse effect to the Rhos Tonyrefail SSSI or the Ely Valley SSSI. Therefore, the conclusion reached in the original assessment of these sites remain valid for this current application.

However, the original assessment did not consider the Cwm Cydfin, Leckwith SSSI or the Severn Estuary SSSI and their features. It was therefore necessary for NRW to consider these sites as part of a new assessment during the renewal exercise.

Natural Resources Wales is of the opinion that the proposal is not likely to have any impact on these sites as the application is a significant reduction to licenced quantities therefore, more water is to be retained in the River Ely than previously licenced.

A SSSI assessment is available on the public register to view.

7.8.3 Other Designations

Ancient Woodland

Ancient woodland sites have been identified as within the potential impact pathway of the proposal. Impacts to these sites need considering if local resource availability is unsatisfactory. Natural Resources Wales is of the opinion that the proposal is unlikely to have any adverse effect on the identified sites, as the proposal is to reduce licenced abstraction quantities. This is considered likely to provide an environmental benefit, as there will be a greater volume of water retained within the River Ely to support downstream flows and habitats.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

Multiple SINC sites have been identified as within the potential impact pathway of the proposal. The abstraction point is within the River Ely SINC and adjacent to Llantrisant Forest and Craig Melyn Woodland and there are further SINC sites downstream of the point of abstraction.

Natural Resources Wales is of the opinion that the proposal is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the identified SINC sites, as the proposal is to reduce licenced abstraction quantities. This is considered likely to provide an environmental benefit, as there will be a greater volume of water retained within the River Ely to support downstream flows and habitats.

7.9 Water Framework Directive (WFD) Regulations 2017

The abstraction is within GB109057027120 Ely R – source to conf Nant Clun, and hydrologically linked with the following waterbodies:

- GB109057027260 - Ely R - conf Nant Clun to Allot Gardens Ely
- GB530905415401 - Severn Lower

This proposed activity has screened out of requiring a Water Framework Directive Assessment. NRW are satisfied that there will be no deterioration in ecological status as a result of the components of the activity authorised by the licence. This renewal is on more restrictive terms, includes a fish screening condition, is not within a protected area, there are no monitoring conditions on the existing licence, no recorded concerns from specialists and the renewed licence will be time-limited.

7.10. Tests to renew the licence

Test	Criteria met?	Justification / detail
Environmental sustainability	Yes	We have reviewed the risk to the environment and deem that the abstraction continues to be sustainable.
Justification of need	Yes	We have reviewed the applicant's returns data which demonstrated that the applicant was abstracting significantly less than their annual licenced quantity and deem that there is a continued justification of need for the water at a reduced quantity as proposed.
Water efficiency	Yes	We have reviewed the applicant's water efficiency measures and have deemed them reasonable.

7.11. Other considerations

Consideration	
Flooding	No concerns have been raised regarding flood risk as a result of this proposal.
Archaeology	No concerns have been raised regarding impacts to the historic environment and archaeology as a result of this proposal.
Recreation and amenity	NRW consider that this proposal will have minimal impact to recreation and amenity.
Subsidence and desiccation	NRW do not have concerns regarding the risk of subsidence and desiccation as a result of this proposal.

7.12 Representations and external consultation/notification responses

No representations were received as this application was not subject to advertising requirements.

7.13 Other consents

The applicant may be required to apply for other consents in addition to this application. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary consents are obtained before commencing this proposal.

8. Cost benefits and environmental mitigation or gain

In accordance with the Environment Act 1995, Section 39, NRW have had regard to costs and benefits in exercising its powers in the assessment below.

Assessment of probable benefits and costs of proposed option to the:	
Water Resources/ The Environment	There is low risk of environmental damage occurring as a result of this proposal. The proposal accords with local water resources policy and is sustainable.
The applicant	The applicant will benefit from the availability of water for their operation. There will be a cost saving from not having to use mains water for this purpose. The applicant will incur the costs of maintaining the method of abstraction and of measuring the volumes of water they abstract. The applicant will have to pay the application fee and an annual subsistence charge based on their licensed quantity.
Natural Resources Wales	Natural Resources Wales will incur the cost of determining the application and enforcing the licence. These costs will be partly recovered through the application charge and annual charges. In determining the licence in accordance with local and national policy, Natural Resources Wales is fulfilling its duties as a regulator.

The economic and social well being of the rural community.	No adverse effects upon the social and economic well being of local communities in the rural area are perceived as a result of this proposal.
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9. Biodiversity and Sustainable development

The principles of sustainable development and biodiversity are embodied in the conditions attached to the licence.

10. Time limit

A time limit has been included in accordance with the CAMS common end date for the catchment and Natural Resources Wales's approved policy.

The licence has an expiry date of greater than 12 years because the applicant applied to renew their licence early. As a result, a minimum value condition has been included in the licence, in the absence of catchment specific minimum value conditions, the quantities specified in the condition are the same as the licenced quantities.

11. Special agreements

There are no special agreements relevant to this proposal.

12. Measurement of water abstracted

The applicant has been advised of the measuring requirements which will comply with the Abstraction Metering Good Practice Manual (R & D Technical Report W84).

The applicant will be required to record quantities of water abstracted at abstraction point as authorised on the licence. The applicant will be required to record abstraction quantities every month, and submit returns to NRW each year, within 28 days after 31 March, and also within 28 days of NRW requesting them.

13. Considerations of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) – compliance with our General Purpose

We are satisfied that this decision is compatible with our general purpose of pursuing the sustainable management of natural resources in relation to Wales and applying the principles of sustainable management of natural resources.

14. Conclusion and decision

Full and due consideration has been given to any representations made, and due regard has been taken of protected rights and other lawful interests.

The principles of sustainable development are embodied in the conditions attached to the licence.

The conditions incorporated on the licence are considered to be necessary and reasonable in light of the available and presented evidence. The conditions are also considered to be consistent with appropriate standards for enforcement by Natural Resources Wales.

NRW has therefore approved the application (as modified) and issue of Licence number WA/057/0031/002/R002 with the conditions applied.

Annex 1 – Administration

Purpose code and loss factor

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Use	Loss factor
I: Industrial, Commercial, Public Services	OTI: Other Industrial / Commercial / Public Services	350: Process Water	Medium

Finance

The licence will be subject to annual charges under paragraph 6.1 of [Natural Resources Wales's water abstraction charges scheme](#)

Annex 2 - Glossary of acronyms used in this document

ALS	Abstraction Licensing Strategy
CAMS	Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy
CRoW	Countryside Rights of Way
EFI	Environmental Flow Indicator

FRAP	Flood Risk Activity Permit
GES	Good Ecological Status
GW	Groundwater
HAF	Hydro abstraction factor
HEP	Hydro-electric power
HES	High Ecological Status
HIA	Hydrological Impact Assessment
HoF	Hands-off flow
HoL	Hands-off level
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LSE	Likely Significant Effect
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
PALS	Permitting and Licensing System
PPS	Public Participation Statement
PWS	Public Water Supply
Q ₃₀	Flow exceeded 50% of the time period considered
Q ₅₀	Flow exceeded 50% of the time period considered
Q ₇₀	Flow exceeded 70% of the time period considered
Q ₉₅	Flow exceeded 95% of the time period considered
RBMP	River Basin Management Plans
ROA	Rights of Access (e
RSA	Restoring Sustainable Abstraction
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SINCs	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (Local Wildlife Sites)
SMNR	Sustainable Management of Natural Resources
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPZ	Source Protection Zone
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
WAT	Welsh Archaeological Trust
WFD	Water Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)
WFS	Water Feature Survey
WIA	Water Industry Act
WR	Water Resources