

The Rt Hon Steve Reed
Secretary of State for Environment, Food
and Rural Affairs

Councillor Bethia Thomas
Leader of the Council

Bethia.Thomas@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Via email:
steve.reed.mp@parliament.uk

Tel: 01235 422422
Abbey House
Abbey Close
Abingdon
OX14 3JE

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Dear Mr Reed,

I was deeply disappointed to hear the announcement this week that Thames Water's Water Resources Management Plan 2024 has been approved.

I wrote to you back in July, expressing this council's many concerns about Thames Water and the proposed reservoir (the South East Strategic Reservoir Option or SESRO) - approximately the size of Gatwick Airport - on prime farmland in our district. I am yet to receive an acknowledgement of this correspondence.

This proposal represents a massive impact on our communities. It is highly troubling you have not taken the opportunity to listen to local views before taking your decision.

I had hoped, after receiving a rather disappointing response from the previous administration earlier in the year, you would be more amenable to engaging with us on this subject and that we could arrange a meeting to discuss this matter further before any decision was taken. Our aim was to initiate a pause in this process so that other options could be properly examined.

Whilst we recognise the need to secure the supply of clean water for future generations, we do not consider that this reservoir is the most appropriate response. Furthermore, whilst we appreciate that this is not a final seal of approval, it is certainly a very big step in a direction we wholeheartedly object to.

I once again request that you meet with me and the MPs whose constituents are directly affected by the SESRO proposal. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the serious concerns held by many of our residents.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Bethia Thomas
Leader of the Council

cc: Layla Moran, MP for Oxford West and Abingdon
Olly Glover, MP for Didcot and Wantage