



South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) Project

Statutory Consultation under Section 42(1)(a) to (c) of the Planning Act 2008 and Regulation 13 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to you regarding the proposed South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) Project ('the Project'). This letter has been sent to you to formally notify you of the statutory consultation on the Project which launches on 28 October 2025 and lasts for 11 weeks until 11:59pm on 13 January 2026. We have a statutory duty to consult you, as you are listed as a statutory party under section 42(1)(a) to (c) of the Planning Act 2008 ('the Act') and/or Regulation 13 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('EIA Regulations').

The Project is being promoted by Thames Water Utilities Ltd of Clearwater Court, Vastern Road, Reading, RG1 8DB. As a statutory undertaker, we are legally obligated to provide water and sewerage services to our customers. This includes responsibility for maintaining public water mains and sewers, as well as treating wastewater.

The project

The Project would include the following water and non-water infrastructure:

- A fully bunded 150 million metres cubed (Mm3) raw (untreated) water storage reservoir;
- A new pumping station;
- A conveyance tunnel to transfer flows between the reservoir and pumping station;
- A conveyance tunnel to transfer flows from the pumping station to the River Thames;
- A new intake/outfall structure on the River Thames from which the Project would abstract water to be stored in the reservoir and potentially form a future Severn to Thames Transfer ("STT") project;

- A new water treatment works (“WTW”) in the vicinity of the reservoir to facilitate the Thames to Southern Transfer (“T2ST”) project and associated pipework;
- A new main access road into the reservoir site from A415 Marcham Road;
- Diversion of the existing East Hanney to Steventon Road;
- Minor improvements to highways outside of the reservoir site including the A34 Marcham Interchange;
- Temporary rail sidings during construction;
- Provision for the Wilts and Berks Canal, to be provided as a water channel to allow for future provision of operational features such as locks;
- Public access, new active travel provision, parking, recreational facilities and public education facilities and buildings;
- Biodiversity habitat, priority areas for biodiversity and landscaping works;
- New recreational lakes;
- Watercourse diversions and associated areas to provide for flooding and ground water drains encircling the reservoir and associated floodplains;
- Provision of renewable energy infrastructure including floating solar, solar on structures and hydroelectric turbines. In addition, potential for ground mounted solar that is assumed to be included at this stage to replace three existing solar farms that would be lost as a result of the Project; and
- Other associated and ancillary development.

The Project is vital infrastructure designed to provide a reliable and sustainable source of water for millions of customers served by Thames Water, Affinity Water, and Southern Water in Oxfordshire and the wider South East region. Located approximately 5km south-west of Abingdon in Oxfordshire, the reservoir and strategic inter-company water transfers will play a pivotal role in strengthening the region’s resilience to climate change, population growth, and drought risk.

We sought and obtained a direction from the Secretary of State under section 35 of the Act which confirms that the Project will be treated as development of national significance for which development consent is required. We intend to make an application for a Development Consent Order (‘DCO’) to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under Section 37 of the Act. It is anticipated that the proposed DCO will, among other things, authorise:

- The construction, operation and maintenance of the Project and associated and ancillary development;
- The compulsory acquisition of land rights in or over land and imposition of restrictions, powers to override, suspend or extinguish rights over land and the temporary use of land;
- The application, modification and/or disapplication of legislation relevant to the Project including that relating to the compulsory acquisition of land; and
- Such ancillary, incidental and consequential provisions, licences, property rights, permits and consents as are necessary and/or convenient.

The Project is an Environmental Impact Assessment (‘EIA’) development as defined in the EIA Regulations. Therefore, we have prepared a Preliminary Environmental

Information Report ('PEIR'), which will inform consultation and the production of an Environmental Statement.

Please also find enclosed a copy of the notice which publicises the proposed application, as required by Section 48 of the Act and Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations.

The Statutory Consultation process

Our consultation runs for 11 weeks, from 28 October 2025 to 11:59pm on 13 January 2026. There are many ways you can get involved, find out more about the Project and have your say on the proposals. We have prepared consultation materials to explain our proposals, which include (among others):

- Statutory consultation brochure
- Feedback form
- Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)
- PEIR Non-Technical Summary (NTS)
- Draft Design Principles
- Delivering a sustainable legacy for people and nature
- Map Book

All consultation materials will be available to view, free of charge, during the consultation period at thames-sro.co.uk/SESRO/statcon2025.

Hard copies of the consultation materials can be requested by calling 0800 033 6677 or by emailing info.SESRO@thameswater.co.uk. Printed copies of all consultation documents may also be requested, although a charge of up to £200 (including VAT, postage and packing) may apply.

The documents will also be available to view free of charge from the start of consultation at:

Location	Opening times	
Abingdon Library, The Charter, Abingdon, OX14 3LY	Monday - Wed	9am - 7pm
	Thursday	9am - 1pm
	Friday	9am - 7pm
	Saturday	9am - 4.30pm
	Sunday	Closed
Wantage Library, Stirlings Road, Wantage, OX12 7BB	Monday	9am - 8pm
	Tuesday – Wed	9am - 5.30pm
	Thursday	9am - 1pm
	Friday	9am - 8pm
	Saturday	9am - 4.30pm
	Sunday	Closed

Public information events

We are hosting seven in-person drop-in public information events where you can find out more about the Project and ask questions to the Project team.

Venue	Date	Time
Didcot Civic Hall, Didcot	Monday 10 November 2025	14:00-20:00
Abingdon Guildhall, Abingdon	Wednesday 12 November 2025	14:00-20:00
Sutton Courtenay Village Hall, Sutton Courtenay	Saturday 15 November 2025	10:00-16:00
Marcham Centre, Marcham	Thursday 20 November 2025	14:00-20:00
War Memorial Hall, East Hanney	Friday 21 November 2025	14:00-20:00
The Beacon, Wantage	Wednesday 26 November 2025	14:00-20:00
Milton Hill House, near Steventon	Thursday 27 November 2025	14:00-20:00

Online information events

We are also hosting two online events which will include a presentation from the Project team summarising the proposals, the consultation process and how to respond. Attendees will also have an opportunity to ask questions of the Project team. All webinars will present the same information. Details of how to register can be found on the consultation website at thames-sro.co.uk/events.

Webinar	Date	Time
Online information event 1	18 November 2025	13:00
Online information event 2	24 November 2025	19:00

How to provide feedback

We encourage you to have your say on the Project by giving us your written feedback in one of the following ways:

- Fill in the online feedback form, accessible via the consultation website which you can find at thames-sro.co.uk/SESRO/statcon2025;
- Email our dedicated consultation response email address at SESRO@ipsos.com;
- Fill in one of our printed feedback forms, which are available from one of our seven public information events, from locations within the community, or by requesting that one is posted to you by the Project team. Completed printed Feedback forms may be posted free of charge to **FREEPOST SESRO CONSULTATION**. Pre-printed envelopes with the FREEPOST address are available where there are printed feedback forms. No stamp is needed;
- Write to us free of charge at **FREEPOST SESRO CONSULTATION**.

All feedback must be received in writing by 11:59pm on 13 January 2026. Responses received after that date may not be considered. We cannot guarantee acceptance of consultation responses submitted via other channels.

If you have any questions about the consultation materials or process, please contact the Project team at info.SESRO@thameswater.co.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Leonie Dubois
Head of Engagement, Land and Consents

Please see the s48 notice enclosed.

Please note that representations received and any accompanying personal data, such as the names of persons over 18, may be made public. Those not wishing their personal information to be made public should state so when submitting their representation. Responses and personal data may be provided to the Secretary of State, the Planning Inspectorate or other relevant statutory authorities in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008. To find out about how we will manage your personal data please refer to our Privacy Notice www.thameswater.co.uk/legal/privacy-notice.