

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

Councillor Bethia Thomas
Leader of the Council

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22 November 2024

Dear Mr Reed,

I am writing further to our previous correspondence on the subject of the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO), and Thames Water's proposal to build a reservoir of unprecedented scale in our district.

At a meeting of our full Council on 23 October 2023 the following was resolved:

Ask the Leader to request of the Secretary of State and of Thames Water that the following must come before DCO approval for SESRO and be published openly so that they can be scrutinised by all levels of government and by the public:

- 1. Embankment failure risk analysis and mitigation planning.*
- 2. Risk analysis and mitigation planning for the impact of emergency drawdown on flooding along the Thames valley.*

Ask the Leader to re-request a meeting with the current Secretary of State with invitations to: the Members of Parliament for Didcot and Wantage and for Oxford West and Abingdon; the Group Against Reservoir Development (GARD); the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE); the leaders of the groups represented in this chamber; and the County Councillors in the proposed zone of development and fall out. Said meeting to discuss the existing concerns that have not yet been addressed and the overall options for governance of the system.

With regard to the safety points, we are pleased that the Scoping Opinion published by the Planning Inspectorate has concluded that matters of dam breach or collapse should be included in the Environmental Statement, but this is only one aspect to consider.

We must press the point regarding the implications of any emergency discharge from the planned reservoir, and particularly any downstream impact on the River Thames.

These are matters of great concern to residents who fear that the consequences of any reservoir emergency, however unlikely, could be calamitous. These matters must surely be examined thoroughly and in public in advance of any decision to proceed.

I have twice previously asked to meet with you to discuss this Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. I now repeat my request: would you be willing to 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