

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to make the following representation and comment on the South East Strategic Reservoir Option. Thames Water has revived its plan for an enormous reservoir between Hanney, Steventon and Drayton in Oxfordshire, despite the result of the Public Enquiry into its initial proposal in 2010. That 2011 Public Enquiry made it clear that its plan was not fit for purpose and the reservoir was unnecessary. Yet they had made a new proposal in 2018 for an even bigger tank-reservoir, 50% larger than that rejected in 2011!

My points are:-

Thames Water has been keeping the proposal from the public as much as possible. Many local people I have spoken to were not aware of it's revival. The Rapid web site for the 'consultation' gives little possibility for opposition. In 2010 Thames Water was much more open in its intentions – sending out brochures and DVD's.

The need for the reservoir is not at all clear. If Thames Water were to stop all current leakage it would obviate any necessity for additional supply.

A reservoir of the proposed size would take an estimated 3-7 years to fill from the River Thames, and if emptied in a drought a further 3-7 years to refill.

There is a viable and cheaper alternative if extra water is required, rather than being stored, and that is transfer from the River Severn. The guidance of the National Infrastructure Commission on inter-regional water transfers is being ignored. Thames Water has not clearly costed its new proposed scheme. Of course it is us, the customers, who would be asked to fund any scheme.

Thames Water appears to be proposing the reservoir as a business capital project – hoping to sell on the stored water to other companies, such as Affinity who did not appear to be interested in 2018.

I really question the feasibility of 'waterproofing' the walls and base of such a huge area, which would have to be 100% and guaranteed for hundreds of years. 25 to 30 m of water would exert a serious threat to the walls and sealant from downward pressure.

A reservoir of the proposed size would pose serious problems of flooding for the Hanneys. They have been very susceptible to flooding in the past due to the high water table and poor surrounding drainage - exacerbated recently by thousands more houses in Hanney, Wantage and Grove. The site planned for a reservoir would occupy a considerable area of the present floodplain causing back-up of overflowing rivers.

The area of the proposed reservoir is almost wholly one of current agriculture. Britain needs every acre of agricultural land to provide food as it currently has to import 50-60% of its food. The Nation should not be deprived of this important food producing area through Thames Water's unnecessary capital project.

The ecology cost of such a project is immense, and it flies against the government environmental policies. It would take 10 years to build causing terrible noise, traffic and dust which would make life intolerable for residents of neighbouring villages. It would be an eyesore in the landscape from the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

I feel strongly that Thames Water's proposal must be completely rejected for the reasons I have listed above. Failing rejection, a second full Public Enquiry into this new proposal must be undertaken - which would surely reveal the serious inaccuracies put forward by Thames Water.

Yours faithfully

