

SAVE OUR LANDS AND RIVER

www.saveourlandsandrivers.org.uk

Mr Chris Weston
Chief Executive Officer
Thames Water Utilities Limited
Clearwater Court
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Reading
Berkshire
RG1 8DB

By email to; chris.weston@thameswater.co.uk

23th February 2024

Dear Mr Weston

Teddington Direct River Abstraction scheme (TDRA) - Thames Water

We want to ask for your direct help in ensuring Thames Water fulfils its promise to work with us to get our fair and reasonable questions about this scheme answered. For many months now we have tried to use the channels of communication Thames Water gave to us, and established for this specific purpose, to provide what we have asked for. Some information has been provided for which we are grateful. However other key information and meetings have been repeatedly promised but neither delivered or arranged.

On 1st December 2023 we met with Cathryn Ross, then joint interim CEO, and her senior colleagues. At that meeting we repeated our request for Thames Water to “show us your workings” around how you have decided TDRA has emerged as your “preferred Best Value scheme”. Thames Water has made it very clear that the proposition of “Best Value” sits at the heart of how you have decided on TDRA. Everyone came away from that meeting understanding Thames Water would finally share the information we have been asking for. Numerous letters, chasing letters, promises from Thames Water, meetings set up and cancelled by Thames Water mean almost 3 months later we are no further forward. We’ve received none of the Best Value information we’ve asked for, no indication when we will receive it, and no rearranged date for the promised meeting.

Save Our Lands And River (SOLAR) is a community organisation that has been engaging with Thames Water over the last 11 months. The organisation came together because when people realised what this scheme was actually proposing the sense of outrage and disbelief was palpable. Over 30,000 people have now signed our petition opposing TDRA and 70 organisations have now endorsed a Shared Statement of Opposition. These numbers continue to grow and embrace the wider public. It's fair to say that Thames Water recognises us as a credible public voice in respect of this scheme.

In June 2023 RAPID published its final decision on the London Water Recycling Schemes for Gate 2. They specifically highlighted that Thames Water “Provide evidence of an increased level of stakeholder and customer engagement relating to these schemes as work progresses through gate three”. This was because of the large volume of public concern there had been about this scheme and because Thames Water was not dealing with fair and reasonable questions from the public.

The range of concerns about this scheme are enormous. It is not seen as a resilient scheme due to its design and location in the context of future river flow challenges and climate changes. It's tiny in terms of volume contribution to water supply and the asset will sit idle for the vast majority of its time. Its main contribution is tipping treated sewage into the river at a rate of 2.5 times any water abstracted and no one understands why a new abstraction asset would be sensible focused on summer months where it will cause increased environmental stress on the river ecology. All this is on top of the land and flood risk impacts during both construction and ongoing. Further there are some 15 alternatives that in our view offer much better value and it is in everyone's interests that we discuss these with you in the context of how your Best Value model works.

Can you please unblock whatever is getting in the way and fulfil what Thames Water has promised repeatedly in terms of providing the information we have asked for.

Yours sincerely

Ian McNuff
For and on behalf of SOLAR

CC. Ms C Ross - Strategy and External Affairs Director
Mr N Muncaster - Asset Management Director
Ms L Dubois - Head of Engagement Land and Consents
Mr C Loughney - Engagement Manager