



Mr Steve Reed MP OBE  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
Copy by email to; [Steve.reed.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:Steve.reed.mp@parliament.uk)

28 September 2024

Dear Mr Reed

### **Proposed Teddington Direct River Abstraction scheme (TDRA) - Thames Water**

We wrote to you on 9th August 2024 setting out our concerns about Thames Water's proposed Teddington Direct River Abstraction Scheme. We await your reply. We are prompted to write again given the London Mayor's recent announcement that Teddington had been selected as one of London's future open water swimming locations. You appeared in that news piece as a supportive voice with Chris Weston, the CEO of Thames Water, an overall plan signatory.

Our letter of the 9th August set out a long list of specific concerns. Each of them is material enough to question Thames Water's proposed TDRA scheme. For the purposes of this letter we will focus only on the very obvious incompatibility of the proposed Teddington DRA scheme with the planned development of a Teddington as a new open water swimming site, and the water quality issues associated with that.

Of the 4 new proposed open water swimming sites, 2 of them (Albany and Teddington) are on the same river reach between Teddington and Molesey Locks. Both are very natural choices. It is extremely difficult to find areas in and around London's tidal Thames that have all the right characteristics for open water activities - It's not just open water swimming that should be considered but all forms of water based activities and the surrounding greenspace areas.

What lies at the heart of the very obvious incompatibility between the Mayor's proposals and Thames Water's TDRA scheme is the vision for London's water and waterways. The Mayor's proposals put the population of London and environment as the driver of what should be done. Identifying Teddington as a future site is entirely logical. It is the first part of the non-tidal Thames in the western side of London. It has enormous and beautiful green spaces around it. There are a well developed set of local amenities and transport links. The immediate local

population - 400,000 people living in Isleworth, Twickenham, Richmond, Ham, and Kingston - alongside the national and locally elected representatives across all parties who represent them would be enthusiastic champions for such a move. We don't make the statement about our local population lightly but from our 16 months of campaigning we simply do not find anyone who believes Thames Water's proposals are either credible, believable or indeed sensible in the face of perfectly practical alternative solutions.

We contrast this with Thames Water's proposal. A proposal to introduce a new pipeline to dump a new volume of 13.6 billion litres of treated sewage into the Thames in an operational year, 9 billion litres of which would be tipped in at Teddington during the 4 peak summer months when swimming and other water use will be at its highest, and the river will be at its most ecologically vulnerable. Thames Water's stated vision for the river with TDRA is that "it will not make the river any worse". This against a baseline where the Mayor stated, when referring to Teddington, that it was "currently too polluted to be safe". Further, In April 2024 the European Parliament announced new rules to improve urban wastewater treatment and reuse, specifically improving the standards around pollutants, pathogens and antimicrobial resistance by 2045. TDRA proposed treatment of sewage does not meet these standards. Thames Water is knowingly setting out a vision to be the "water quality sick man of Europe" under what they propose.

We emphasise one further point from our letter of the 9th August 2024. Thames Water continues to refuse to "show us their workings" on how they calculated "Best Value". So here is a very specific example that illustrates perfectly why what Thames Water says is not credible. Their Best Value element that considers the issue in this letter is "enhancement of the social, health and economic wellbeing of the local community". It is worth less than 5% of the score available. If that is not bad enough (way too low), Thames Water has scored the TDRA proposal as a major positive (their highest score) under a definition that says "The option leads to a major positive effect on the health of local communities, will ensure surface water and bathing water quality is maintained within statutory limits, creating new and significantly enhancing existing recreational facilities, publicly accessible green space and /or tourism". We hope you can understand why the public finds this a preposterous assessment.

Come down to Teddington to see for yourself exactly what Thames Water proposes to do and why there are better, greener and cheaper alternatives. The scheme needs to be set aside. It's not and never will be customer and environment led, and remains a huge waste of money.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Ian McNuff  
For and on Behalf of SOLAR

CC Sadiq Khan The Mayor of London  
Munira Wilson MP, Sarah Olney MP, Ed Davey MP, Ruth Cadbury MP