

Update on Thames Water Resource Management Plan 24 (TWRMP24) September 2023

Consultation on this plan closed at the end of March 2023 and like many other organisations and individuals, the RTS put in a detailed response. Thames Water has now considered those responses and towards the end of August 2023 provided a revised plan which has now gone to DEFRA for formal consideration.

The TW consultation website includes yet again large number of documents, including detailed comments on the responses received. Overall, there is little change to Thames Water's proposals, although they have increased their targets for reducing leaks and in demand reduction. Teddington Direct River Extraction (DRA) remains, but capped at 75million l/d. The justification for this seems mostly cost-effectiveness, with a promise to work with the local community to understand and address their concerns. However, it seems they will continue to examine a potential water recycling scheme in East London as a reserve option. A bigger version of the Abingdon (SESRO) reservoir is now favoured (150Mm³), in spite of local opposition. Plans for water transfer from the Severn area via the Cotswold Canals or pipeline are not being actively progressed.

The Thames Water response to the RTS comments can be found in the Appendices section in G1 with ID 2610. There are no responses to those comments we made which fell outside the standard narrative, presumably because there was no ready cut-and-paste response. The rest was as might be expected, although among the reasons for rejecting our arguments that there was no need to put treated sewage in above Teddington since it could go direct to the East London reservoirs we had. Full advanced treatment is complex and an energy intensive process that would have higher environmental and carbon impacts when compared to the currently (sic) technologies associated with the Teddington DRA scheme". OK, I guess we knew it took energy to treat sewage properly, but this argument seems a risky one for Thames Water to use when trying to justify putting partially-treated sewage back into the Thames.

We now wait, but without much optimism, for the formal response from Government. Then, depending on the options being progressed, there could well be further opportunities for input from the public and organisations like the RTS.