



Meeting note

Project name	Teddington Direct Rive Abstraction (TDRA) and South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) Projects
File reference	References: WA020002 / WA010005
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	16 August 2024
Meeting with	Thames Water Utilities Limited
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting
Circulation	All attendees/ additional contacts to share meeting note

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the meeting note could be delayed up to six months, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted.

SESRO Project Overview

The Applicant provided a project overview of the SESRO project. The Applicant explained that the Proposed Development is a raw water storage reservoir aimed at providing resilience for South East customers and would provide up to 271MI/D (megalitres per day). The Proposed Development would supply to local customers in Thames Water, Southern Water and Affinity Water regions. The Applicant explained that water would be abstracted from the River Thames near Culham. The Proposed Development would have a surface area of approximately 6.7km² (square Kilometres) and capacity 150Mm³. The Applicant explained that water would be returned to the River Thames when the river level drops or demand for water increases. The Proposed Development will be designed to provide opportunities for new habitats and provision for new leisure and recreation facilities.

Summer 2024 consultation

The Applicant stated that it has held a three-month non-statutory consultation that closes on the 28 August 2024. The consultation has been held in relation to the masterplan and design options for the Project. The Applicant stated that it has held 7 community events with over

1,250 people attending. The Applicant stated that it had also held technical liaison groups, which comprise statutory consultee representatives for a range of topic-specific meetings.

Interim masterplan and options

The Applicant explained that the reservoir embankment would be 15-25m high depending on topography. The Applicant stated that there would be flood plain storage compensation as a number of water courses will be diverted. The Applicant provided a summary of options for the Proposed Development, and it explained that temporary rail sidings are under consideration to facilitate construction. The Applicant explained that it is considering whether to include Southern Water's proposed water treatment works (WTW) (which are required to facilitate the Thames to Southern water transfer) within the Development Consent Order (DCO) for SESRO. The Inspectorate asked whether the proposed WTW have been addressed in its proposed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping request and whether there is a timeline for the Applicant to decide whether it is including these works in the DCO. The Applicant confirmed that it is included in scoping and a decision on whether to include the works in the DCO will be taken before the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).

The Inspectorate asked whether the responses from consultation will be included in its scoping request. The Applicant explained that the responses would not be taken into account in the scoping request, as the programmes did not allow for this. However, all responses are being taken into account as part of project development for the next phases of PEIR and statutory consultation.

The Inspectorate asked if any designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interests (SSSI) will be affected. The Applicant stated that no designated features are currently thought to be impacted but will provide an update to the Inspectorate if this changes.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping update

The Applicant stated that it intends to submit its request for EIA Scoping Opinion to the Inspectorate on 28 August 2024. The Applicant explained that it proposes to scope out the Dam Breach analysis from the major accidents and disasters chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) and carry this out in post-consent in accordance with the requirements of the Reservoirs Act 1975. The Applicant explained that it is awaiting further responses from the Environmental Agency regarding this. The Inspectorate queried whether major accidents and disasters will still be scoped in, and the Applicant confirmed that parts of the major accidents and disasters chapter are still proposed to be.

Teddington Direct River Abstraction update

The proposed project is a water transfer and recycling scheme that aims to address the need for Thames Water to be 1 in 200-year drought resilient. The proposed project could provide up to 75Ml/d during drought conditions which equates to providing over 500,000 people water per day. Raw river water would be abstracted from the River Thames during times of drought and replaced by recycled water from Mogden Sewage Treatment Works (STW) to ensure no change in river flow over Teddington weir. It is proposed to be built and

operational by 2033 with intermittent operation, typically alternating years during the months of August to October.

Autumn 2023 Consultation

The Applicant presented information about the consultation conducted in the autumn of 2023 and provided a summary of the consultation reach and levels of engagement. Owing to volume of consultation responses, the Applicant has been taking these on board and making changes to the design to reduce environmental impact. This includes using a tunnel boring machine methodology to reduce the number of intermediate shaft locations and pushing all tunnel excavation materials back to the drive site to be removed to reduce HGV movement around communities.

Design changes and update

Two shafts are now proposed at the Mogden STW. New tunnel drive shaft 1 will likely be located on the west side of the STW. Tunnel construction materials are proposed to be imported into and exported from Mogden STW, and all tunnel spoil would be handled and exported from the same. There are design changes at in the intermediate shaft (shaft 3) with the preferred site being at Ham Playing Fields. The location needs to be no more than 2.5KM from preceding and subsequent shafts and is required for access, ventilation and for health and safety.

The Applicant is continuing discussion with the Environment Agency (EA) to consider the design of the outfall/intake site. It is also engaging with the promoters of the proposed River Thames Scheme to consider the potential for cumulative effects, particularly during construction.

The Inspectorate asked if there are any key themes of discussion with the EA and Natural England (NE). The Applicant confirmed that having regard to the level of available information and avoiding application of any mitigation, as required under Stage 1 of the HRA process, the Applicant intends to take forward to stage 2 appropriate assessment the Richmond Park Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) owing to the potential that Ham Lands provides stag beetle functional habitat linked to the SAC.

Engagement with the EA has focused on three key areas of potential impact to the river: water quality, thermal heating and the abstraction location and need for fish/eel screening. The Inspectorate asked if the environmental permit (EP) application for the scheme is on a similar timeline to the DCO application; the Applicant confirmed that it is, and it proposed to submit a draft EP application ahead of the DCO to have confidence that the timelines are similar. The Applicant further explained issues under discussion with the EA. There is concern about the potential thermal effect of the scheme on the river water at different times of the year, particularly in the winter months when the river water will cool faster than the recycled water and a potential loss of fish and fish fry during abstraction. The Applicant confirmed that the current design is legislation compliant, but the EA has advised that given the sensitive location of the proposed abstraction point, mitigation measures should go further.

The Inspectorate asked if the designs have the potential to interact with other relevant water schemes. The Applicant confirmed that they have developed a list of potential projects within the 'buffer zone' to review in case deeper analysis of interaction is needed.

The Applicant stated that it has a design champion within the project team and is considering the use of a Design Panel, noting that the SESRO project is using the Design Council.

EIA Scoping

The Applicant intends to submit its request for an EIA Scoping Opinion in October 2024. It advised that the scoping boundary will include a buffer to accommodate potential design refinement prior to DCO application submission. The Applicant has involved EA, NE, Hounslow, Richmond, and Kingston planning authorities in pre-EIA scoping technical discussions.