



Environmental Newsletter

Summer 2025

Welcome to the summer edition of our Environmental Newsletter. As ever our aim is to share updates and the latest news from across Thames Water.

Topics:

1. Our Business plan and River Health & Community Fund
2. Bathing Waters
3. Biodiversity
4. SandSCAPE Project
5. South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO)
6. Teddington Direct River Abstraction (TDRA)
7. Environmental Guardians
8. The Drainage & Wastewater Management Plan



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Our Business Plan and 'River Health & Community Fund'

Business Plan

The Price Review (PR) process takes place every five years; as part of this process, we formulate our plans for the next five years and a limit is set for customer bills during that period, approved by our regulator Ofwat. The latest Price Review, known as PR24, covers the regulatory period for 2025 to 2030. The Final Determination is Ofwat's decision on our plans.

In February 2025, we requested a referral of our Final Determination to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) for a redetermination, after concluding that the Final Determination did not appropriately support the investment and improvement that is required for Thames Water to deliver for its customers, communities and the environment for the next five years.

We have begun our year 1 investment; there will be no delay to the delivery of Thames Water's plans for year one of AMP8 as a result of any referral to the CMA. Customer bills for 2025-26 will be unaffected.

This referral was deferred for 18 weeks from the 18th March 2025, following agreement between ourselves and Ofwat, to allow for further discussions to unlock market led solutions.



River Health & Community Fund

In March 2025 we announced our plan to invest £20 million between 2025-2030; working more closely with environmental groups and communities. While details are still being finalised the key principles of the fund are:



- Support available for all catchment partnerships, councils, farmers, and community groups to enhance the environment.
- Additional funding for river catchments with the greatest partnership opportunities aligned with our business plan deliverables.
- Funding opportunities for co-delivery.

We will share more details in due course.

Bathing Waters

A designated bathing water is an official recognition that a body of water (whether a beach, lake or river) is a popular site for swimming, and other water-based recreation.

The government have indicated that they expect to introduce [key reforms](#) related to; the length of season, feasibility studies for new locations and ending the automatic de-designation process.

There are eight bathing waters in our operational area, including two located on rivers. We recently completed a study at [Wolvercote Mill Stream](#) near Oxford, which will help inform our next steps to improve the classification.

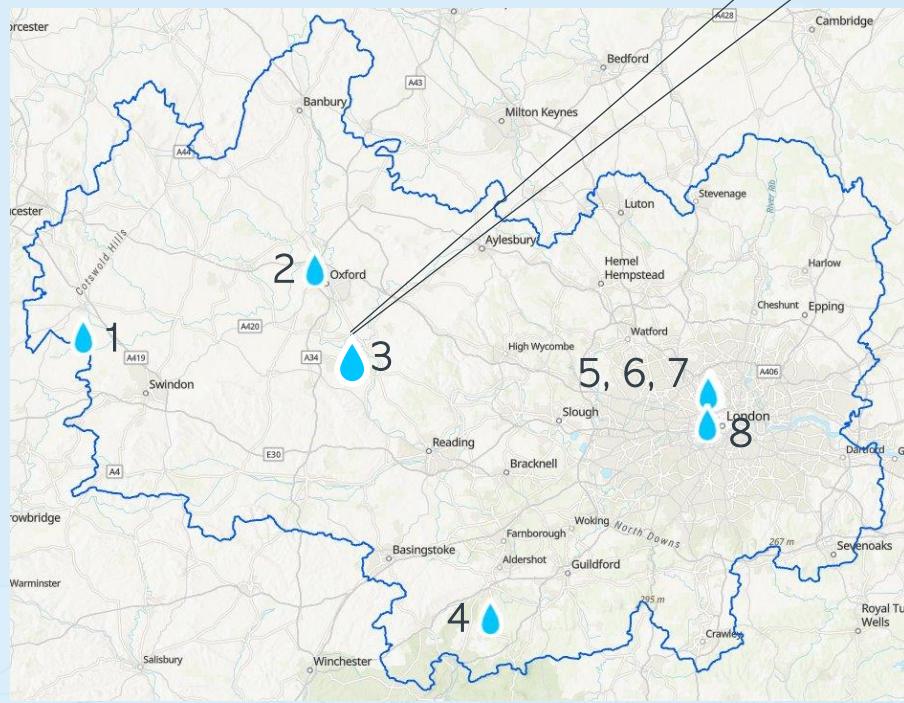
Wallingford Beach

The most recent designation in our region was at Wallingford Beach. It was classified as Poor in 2024. We will be carrying out a study this summer to better understand the impact our assets have at this location.

The bathing water season started on May 15th. If you're interested in viewing the Environment Agency's statutory sampling data at these locations, it is available on the [Swimfo website](#).

We're working with our stakeholders in areas where there is interest in new bathing water locations. If you'd like to find out more about our involvement at Wolvercote Mill or Wallingford Beach, please contact

ThamesWaterPartnership@thameswater.co.uk.



- 1 Cotswold Country Park Beach
- 2 Wolvercote Mill Stream (River)
- 3 Wallingford Beach (River)
- 4 Frensham Great Pond
- 5 Hampstead Heath Pond 1
- 6 Hampstead Heath Pond 2
- 7 Hampstead Heath Pond 3
- 8 The Serpentine – Hyde Park

Biodiversity

Our Biodiversity Team has recently been awarded the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) **Best Practice Large-Scale Practical Nature Conservation Award** for the habitat creation and restoration project at the historic land treatment area at Godalming sewage works.

This project formed part of the AMP7 (2020-2025) Biodiversity Performance Commitment and worked with the local Unstead Nature Community Group to create 1.2 hectares of lakes, ponds and wetland, plant 3,879 trees and restore meadow grassland. These enhancements have benefitted the local wildlife and have led to an increase in species using the site. The scheme has also benefitted the local community, with over 180 volunteers now registered with the group.



Man Orchid

The rare 'Man Orchid' has been recorded at Chinnor Reservoir, with 10 individual plants recorded this year, up from 2 in 2024. As of last year, this was a new record for the site, as well as the area, with the closest next record for this species over 3km away.

The Man Orchid, so called for the humanoid shaped flowers (which look more like little yellow aliens), has suffered a 56% decline in Britain, and is listed as 'nationally scarce' in the UK.

Thames Water sites known to support orchid species have reduced grassland management over the summer months to protect and support the growth of these important orchid populations.

Our Biodiversity Team will continue supporting nature recovery in AMP8 (2025-2030); seeking to achieve an increase of over 150 biodiversity units in accordance with the industrywide Biodiversity Performance Commitment.

The Performance Commitment will include 10-15 operational sites which will be enhanced for biodiversity through tree and hedgerow planting, wetland and pond creation and grassland enhancement. These will be both clean and wastewater sites, spread over the entire Thames region.



SandSCAPE Project

Thames Water is leading the SandSCAPE (Science and Novel Devices for Sustainable Cleaning and Productivity Enhancement) project in collaboration with Affinity Water, South West Water and Northumbrian Water Group. The £1.9 million project will test new robotic underwater technologies designed to simplify and speed up the cleaning and maintenance of slow sand filtration methods used in the water treatment process, whilst maintaining the high quality of drinking water treatment.

Slow Sand Filtration

Slow sand filtration is a nature based, chemical free process for purifying water by removing contaminants through biological and physical processes using fine sand.

An innovative solution by Thames Water that would use robotic underwater tech to modernise the water treatment process, is one of the winners of a £42 million innovation competition by Ofwat. For more information about this and other winning projects, please visit the [website here](#).



Filter beds at Hampton Water Treatment Works



About the Ofwat Innovation Fund

The Ofwat Innovation Fund aims to grow the water sector's capacity to innovate, enabling it to better meet the evolving needs of customers, society and the environment. It is encouraging new ways of working that go beyond business-as-usual innovation practices in the water industry. It is delivered by challenge prize experts Challenge Works in partnership with Arup and Isle Utilities.

South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO)

Our proposal to build an essential new reservoir in Oxfordshire is evolving following the public consultation that we held in 2024. The proposed reservoir is one of the most critical pieces of infrastructure under development in the UK and crucial for tackling future water challenges in the South East.

With a growing population, climate change, and the need to protect our rivers, we need a more resilient water supply to guard against the uncertainty of the future. A new reservoir would help us to address those challenges and secure water supplies for around 15 million people in the South East, including Thames Water, Southern Water and Affinity Water customers.



Since the public consultation that we held last year, proposals are developing, including updates to our designs and widening our programme of environmental surveys. We're building more than just a vital water resource. We're creating a space where people can unwind, explore and connect with nature - all while helping to secure the region's water supply for future generations.

We were pleased to host a series of customer information events this summer to provide an opportunity to learn more about the proposals and ask questions to the project team. We're planning to hold our statutory consultation later in 2025, where we'll be asking for feedback on our detailed proposals.

Local engagement

We're engaging with schools and colleges in the area to provide updates on the project and have set up focus groups and user groups to work with local people to help shape the master plan.

We're committed to working with local communities to ensure we understand local priorities and make the most of the opportunities the project can offer to existing communities and future generations.



Questions? Contact our SESRO engagement team at info.SESRO@thameswater.co.uk or visit www.thames-sro.co.uk/sesro.



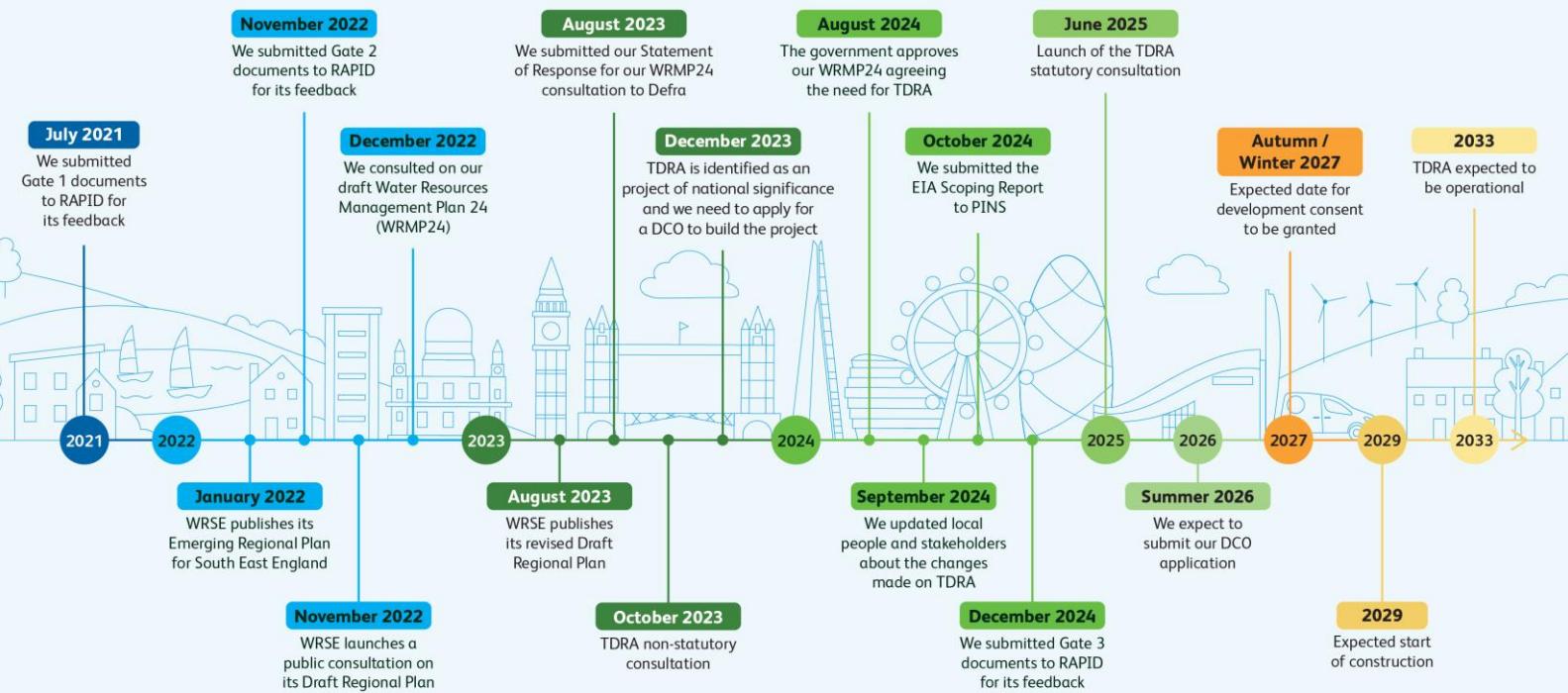
Teddington Direct River Abstraction (TDRA) Project

The project would enable us to abstract more water from the River Thames during periods of drought, upstream of Teddington Weir. The water would be transferred along a new connecting pipeline to an existing underground tunnel and would then join the Lee Valley reservoirs in East London, ready for treatment.

On 17 June 2025, we launched a statutory consultation on our updated proposals for the Teddington Direct River Abstraction (TDRA) project; a vital drought resilience project for London with key activities – including building tunnels, new structures and shafts – at Mogden Sewage Treatment Works, Ham Playing Fields and near Teddington Weir.

Our statutory consultation will last 10 weeks until **26 August 2025** and the feedback we receive will help us shape our proposals to keep water flowing for the future. During the consultation, we're holding eight in-person events and two online information events. We have a [dedicated consultation webpage](#) with everything needed to help customers understand our latest proposals and provide feedback.

River Thames at Teddington Weir



Environmental Guardians

We've continued to grow our Environmental Guardians initiative, which launched in early 2024. This voluntary scheme gives employees the opportunity to put their environmental values into action by carrying out visual assessments of surface water outfalls.

As of March 2025, our Guardians have completed over 1,100 individual assessments and identified 13 potential pollution incidents, helping to protect rivers and local habitats.

[Click to hear from our guardians](#)

Interview: Craig Pezet, Environmental Protection

What is the Environmental Guardians Initiative?

The Environmental Guardians Initiative is a voluntary programme driven by Thames Water employees who care deeply about protecting the environment. As Environmental Guardians, staff go above and beyond by keeping an eye on outfalls they regularly pass in their own time. They carry out simple visual checks for any signs of potential pollution and report anything of concern, helping us respond quickly and protect local rivers and wildlife.

How is the data used?

The assessments are recorded and help us build a big picture of what is going on with our outfalls across the business. An assessment showing an outfall has been historically clean and dry can help us identify that the pollution is more likely to be coming from a new sudden source, like a blockage; while constant, low-level pollution can indicate a potential misconnection.

How many active Guardians are there?

In May 2025 alone, 108 employees actively took part in the initiative by completing an outfall assessment, demonstrating their ongoing monthly commitment to protecting the environment.

How do volunteers know what to look for?

Volunteers can find guidance documents on what to look for before they assess an outfall. These are based on the same information we provide to members of the public participating in an Outfall Safari, so you don't have to be an expert to help identify potential issues.

If a pollution has been caused by a problem with our network, we'll get it fixed as soon as possible. We report all known pollution incidents to the Environment Agency.

View our updated [Pollution Incident Reduction Plan \(PIRP\)](#).



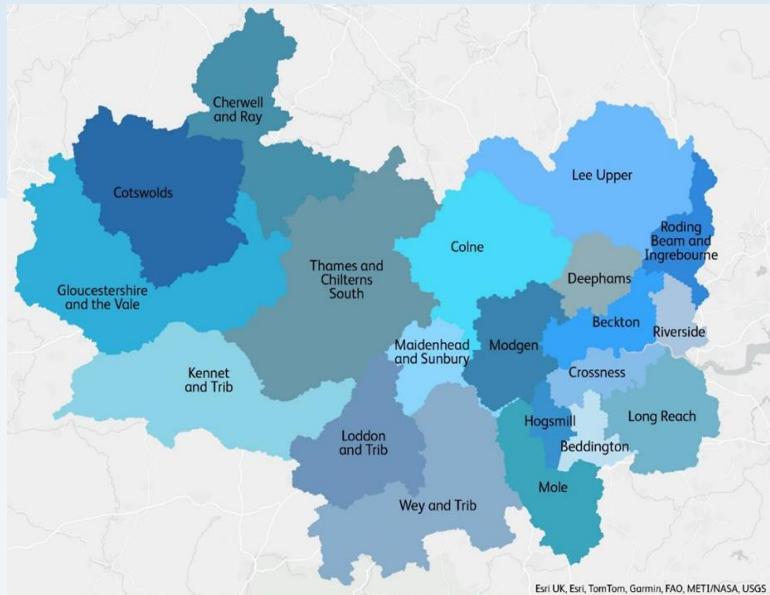
The Drainage & Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP)



Hello, I'm Shelly Hartnoll, and I'm excited to introduce myself as the DWMP Stakeholder Engagement & Digital Platforms Lead for Thames Water. I've recently stepped into this role after working for several years in frontline operational delivery, and I'm passionate about using that experience to strengthen how we engage, collaborate and share information as we move through Cycle 2 of the Drainage & Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP).

Cycle 2 marks a fresh phase of activity, building on the foundations of [Cycle 1](#) and setting a clear path towards our draft plan in 2027. In June, we hosted two webinars to formally launch Cycle 2, share our ambitions for the programme, and kick-start our updated engagement strategy.

We've also shared our Strategic Context Document with the Level 1 Forum (representative stakeholders across the Thames region) to align on the shared challenges we face.



Recent engagement has included work with the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham on modelling and risk assessments.

Looking ahead, we're developing a new stakeholder website and digital portal, due to launch in autumn. This will make it easier for partners to access key resources, keep up to date, and take part in our work.

With two years until we publish our draft plan (November 2027, ahead of consultation in August 2028), here's what's coming up:

Now to March 2026 - We're carrying out risk assessments using updated metrics, with results to be shared via the online portal and through workshops.

From 2026 - We'll shift focus to identifying options. We'll be seeking your input on possible solutions.

Ongoing - Annual progress updates will continue to be published on our website.



If you have any questions, or if you would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact us at DWMP@thameswater.co.uk.

STOPPING POLLUTION IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US

With over 108,000 KMs (that's nearly 2.5 times round the world) of sewers, your help is invaluable in helping us spot when issues occur.

If you spot a potential pollution, contacting us promptly enables us to respond and mitigate any environmental impact as soon as possible

And to support our learning from incidents, we will also capture details of what happened, supported by water analysis and photographic evidence, which we must share with the Environment Agency.

We've made contacting us easier with our new Report a Pollution Online page. Available online 24/7, 7 days a week. Use this QR code to access it:

Or alternatively calling us on 0800 316 9800 to speak to our Pollution Desk Hotline.

