South East Strategic Reservoir Option (Sesro)

Interim master plan and design options

Public consultation – summer 2024

Consultation response, by Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Transport Sustainably (POETS)

August 2024

POETS (Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Transport Sustainably) is a group of senior planning, environment and transport professionals and academics focussed primarily on planning and transport in Oxfordshire.

For more information go to *www.poetsplanningoxon.uk*

The South East Strategic Reservoir Option (Sesro) – A Missed Opportunity

1. The Sesro master planning exercise perpetuates Thames Water's long-standing intention to construct a 150Mm^3 reservoir to the south-west of Abingdon. This will involve 10 years of disruption during the construction phase, while previous reports make clear that this will primarily serve London's water demand.

2. The creation of a lowland shallow reservoir in a time of accelerating climate change and global warming, resulting in increasing evaporation, would be irresponsible and wasteful. POETS do not believe that the case for a new reservoir has been made and Thames Water should, as a matter of urgency, be doing much more

    - to reduce losses and leakage in the system and

    - to impose much greater control and regulation to reduce water demand from homes and businesses.

3. Construction of any new reservoir would involve huge volumes of embedded carbon, compounding the pressures on water supply and demand arising from climate change.

4. Thames Water should instead be developing a different package of measures that balances any new water storage, or transfers from other areas, with urgent action to reduce wastage and demand.