

2018 WET10 DEBATE

"Mind The Gap -

The future water security challenge for London and SE England"

Date: The Eve of World Water Day on Wednesday 21st March 2018

Venue: Guildhall Members Club, 3rd Floor, Aldermanbury

Main Speaker:

Richard Aylard CVO, External Affairs and Sustainability Director from Thames Water

Review Panel:

- John Dickie – London First (Director of Policy and Strategy)
- Sir Tony Redmond, Regional Chair, Consumer Council for Water
- Léonie Cooper, London Assembly Member, Merton & Wandsworth
- Martin Salter, National Campaigns Co-ordinator, Angling Trust

Introduction

Mike Williamson, Master of the Water Conservators, opened the event by welcoming everyone present to the WET10 conference. He explained the WET10 group was formed to encourage dialogue between Livery Companies who are involved in the supply or use of water. He then introduced Richard Aylard CVO, to give the main presentation.

Main Presentation

Richard Aylard started by explaining that it was Thames Water's responsibility to provide a reliable supply of safe drinking water to around 10 million household customers and 215,000 businesses in London and across the Thames Valley, putting an average of 2,600 MI of drinking water into supply every day. Water companies are required to produce a 25 year Water Resource Plan updated every 5 years but Thames Water had agreed with Ofwat and Defra to extend their plan to 80 years to ensure a long term robust plan in terms of future water resource development.

To explain the plan, Richard started with a look back at the 2014 plan. This had identified a potential 133 MI/d gap by 2020. The plan focused on managing demand in the short term (5 years from 2015-2020) with a commitment to achieve ~ 106 MI/d of demand savings

through leakage reduction, metering and water efficiency. Thames Water has been delivering the programme that was set out in that plan and by 2020 they will have achieved all their commitments set out in the plan.

The latest plan has identified that the gap between demand and available water resources will grow to 862 MI/d by 2100. Richard identified 3 key reasons behind the gap:-

- 1) By 2045 there will be an additional two million people living in the Thames Water area. That's the equivalent of Birmingham and Glasgow moving in.
- 2) There will be less water available for public supply due to a changing climate – with a forecast impact of a possible 200 MI/d reduction in water available by 2100.
- 3) We need to protect the environment – The Environment Agency has identified likely sustainability reductions including chalk streams that are an important natural habitat.

The supply/demand gap would have economic and environmental impacts, affecting the UK economy – particularly manufacturing and agriculture, business confidence, housing and infrastructure delivery. A severe drought could cost London's economy up to £330 million every day and last for months.

To close the gap Thames Water has identified a number of options including:-

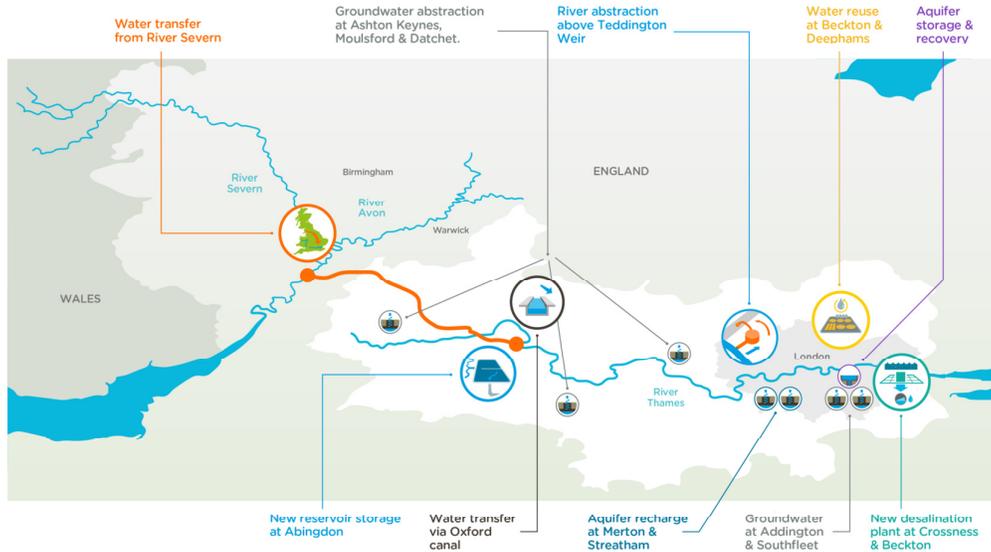
- 1) Continuing to reduce leakage.
- 2) Installing smart meters to help customers manage their use of water better.
- 3) Providing more water saving advice and gadgets.

Thames Water has also considered a wide range of options on new supplies including:-

- 1) Bringing water in from somewhere wetter – Severn to Thames pipeline.
- 2) A new storage reservoir at Abingdon.
- 3) Abstracting more above Teddington weir.
- 4) Using wastewater via effluent reuse plants.
- 5) More desalination at Beckton and Crossness.
- 6) More groundwater abstraction at a number of locations .

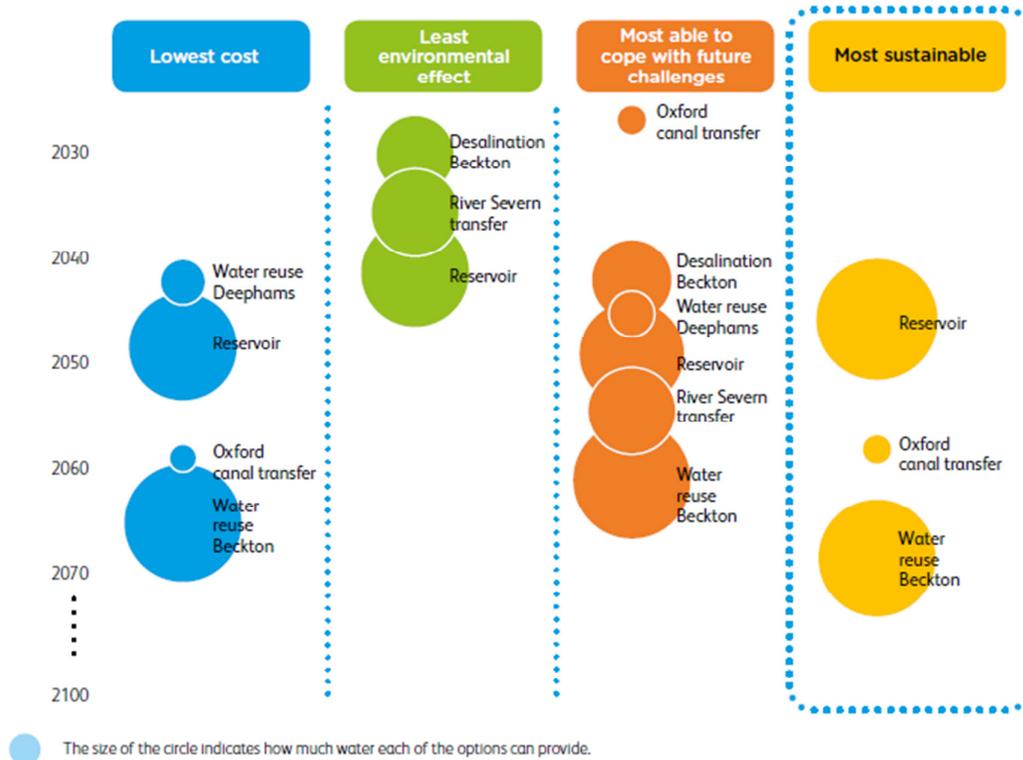
To build a preferred plan Thames Water have considered a number of factors including cost, customer preferences, impact on the environment, deliverability, resilience and intergenerational fairness.

The pressures of growth and climate change are affecting the whole of the South East of England and Thames has been working with other water companies to take a coordinated approach to tackle the issues and plan for the future. The preferred plan includes a provision of 130 million litres of water to other water companies.



New Supply Options Considered By Thames Water

The plan for the next 5 years focusses on leakage reduction, smart metering, water efficiency savings, some further groundwater developments and water trades with other companies. Longer term options in the plan are highlighted below.



Longer term Options In The Plan

Review Panel Response

John Dickie, Director of Policy and Strategy, at London First, replied on behalf of London businesses. He explained that water was a key part of the basic infrastructure and central to the credibility of London as a business centre. The impact of the recent cold weather event highlighted this, highlighting that reputational damage as well as cost was key. He had been following the impact of the drought in Cape Town and how this had become a world story.

For business a higher level of resilience was important. Regarding his view on the Thames Water plan, he welcomed actions on all fronts. On leakage reduction, a programme that carefully managed road closures was required using technology to minimise impact. He suggested the preferred plan should take account of the total cost to the City, rather than the least cost to the water provider. Demand management was welcomed but providing for growth was key. Substantial new supplies are needed quickly, with a new reservoir as early as possible, but not based on a blank cheque. Important that the regulator focusses on security of supply above the bill cost.

Sir Tony Redmond, Regional Chair, Consumer Council for Water, stressed the importance of a secure and stable supply of water to customers. A significant reduction in leakage was critical to encourage customers that they needed to save water through water efficiency. He welcomed the serious engagement and collaboration with other water companies to build a coordinated plan.

He asked for more to be done on customer education as there was insufficient awareness of the scale of the problem. This would help in getting customers on side with the need for metering. Environmental considerations should not be under stated. In summary Sir Tony said he acknowledged the need to do more, however, this has to be paid for, so value is important and Thames Water needs to do more on leakage.

Léonie Cooper, chair of the London Assembly Environmental Committee said that water supply was not focussed on by customers, and there was a lack of awareness of the future deficit in supply. Customer usage in London (156 l/h/d) was above the national average and higher than target of 130 l/h/d set by Ofwat. The Mayor has targeted 105 l/h/d for new dwellings. Thames Water was falling behind on leakage making customer reductions in l/h/d a hard sell. Leonie asked for a faster response to leak repairs, better use of predictive technology to manage bursts, and a step up in the smart metering programme. She also asked for a continued focus on publicity to raise awareness on the £12m /day cost of removing wet wipes from the sewer system.

Martin Salter, former MP and National Campaigns Co-ordinator for the Angling Trust stressed there was a lack of awareness of the possible impact of future population growth on water supply security. He said the most vulnerable people suffer most in a drought. Therefore we must meet the future challenges on water deficits with a need for greater

headroom. He was concerned that the latest water resource plan had yet again pushed backed the additional reservoir storage at Abingdon to 2040. He asked for the reservoir to be brought forward. It was important not only to provide water security for the future but also provided huge environmental benefits for all the SE water companies with the ability to provide additional supplies to Affinity with benefits for many chalk rivers including the River Colne and Misbourne via reduced groundwater abstractions. Water needs to become more political and we need to focus on the bigger picture.

Questions

Question – Grey water is used on the continent for toilets. What is the cost effectiveness in the UK?

Response – Grey water reuse is really important for new developments and regeneration. Grey water toilets have been installed in City Hall and could be used in a number of large buildings. Businesses need to fix running urinals.

Question – How do we work towards the UKWIR target of zero leakage?

Response – Water utilities need to collaborate more on the use of technology to reduce leakage. We need more trunk main monitoring to highlight leakages and prevent them from becoming bursts with serious disruption.

Question – How do we build customer awareness of the future water supply deficit?

Response – Getting TV crews to attend visits to water installations and sewers. The recent publicity on the fatburg is a good example of what is needed on water security, and getting people to think more about metering and variable tariffs. It is also important to engage with schools, focus and community groups to sell the future water security message.

Mike Williamson then thanked the speakers who were applauded by all and invited everyone to join him for drinks and canapes in an adjacent room.

Rob Casey, Walbrook Warden, Company of Water Conservators



Delegates Networking Before The Wet 10 Debate