



West Berks Scrutiny Questions

	Topic	Response
1)	How can the Council, Thames Water and the Environment Agency work more effectively on information / education campaigns?	<p>It would be helpful if we could develop an overarching view of flooding in the West Berks area, the impacts and what each responsible authority is doing to reduce the extent of this flooding and mitigate against the impacts.</p> <p>As this is likely to be a long-term strategy, it would help if we can develop a joint flood response plan that sets out what each of the respective agencies will do in preparation for winter and set out their own incident response plan. This would include a communications strategy that provides information to residents and businesses etc. Within this, we would also set out how people can help, such as refraining from diverting flood waters to foul sewers, from pumping basements into foul sewers or from disposing of paper, rag, wet-wipes, oil and grease etc into the local sewer system to prevent blockages.</p> <p>The drop-in sessions in Lambourn for example have proved successful with having all agencies there to respond to customers questions and joint education on certain topics.</p>

2)	Who is responsible for clean-up after sewage has landed on the streets and pavements?	TW will provide a clean-up of areas affected by sewer flooding, which involves a litter pick of any debris, wash down the area if appropriate and disinfect any hard standing areas. Sewer flooding Emergencies Help Thames Water . Last year, we did daily/weekly clean ups and we will adjust our response this year to enable us to respond more quickly, although this will be influenced by overall work demands and linked to the extent of flooding across the wider Thames Valley area.
3)	Will the WBC section 19 report and any other relevant documentation and evidence gathered this winter/spring be used to inform revisions to the GISMP documents?	Thames Water will look to make use where possible and appropriate data that supports the annual update of the GISMPs. However, it should be noted that as the documents are published on the TW website we have to show care / due diligence where we are unable to validate the source of data/or be certain of the ownership of certain types of data.
4)	How do you log calls, and why have people been told they are the only ones affected by a particular issue? Please check that the automatic reply email system has been rectified, and explain people are being told there is no evidence when there clearly is.	Last winter we identified a fault in our system that we have been working to address. We have already made a number of improvements to our automated communication to prevent incorrect and duplicate communications being sent. In readiness for winter we are also implementing an improved flooding communication, as well as follow up proactive communication, so where we have investigated issues and not been able to fully identify the cause due our sewers being hydraulically overloaded, we will carry out aftercare calls and attended and clean up where required.
5)	I understand from Thames Water that they have enforcement powers if they have concerns about clean water connections on private land, and WBC have enforcement powers if they have concerns about foul water connections on private land. Please can both TW and WBC provide figures for how many enforcement actions have been taken in recent years and each provide an anonymised example of what form this action took, to help educate residents about their responsibilities and what might	<p>Water:</p> <p>There are generally three times where a connection to the network will either be deferred or removed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A water regulations inspection ahead of connection failing. This could be by a Thames Water accredited inspector or an independent inspector directly engaged by the developer. The developer is then given the opportunity to resolve and be re-inspected 2. A quality inspection of a new water main constructed by the developer for future adoption by Thames Water under the Self Lay provider model. These construction assurance visits take place during construction and on completion. Connection

	<p>happen if they don't look after the connections on their land.'</p>	<p>to the existing Thames Water network will be permitted if no issues have been raised or any that have been raised have been rectified.</p> <p>3. If an illegal connection is discovered, then a process can be followed that leads to disconnection of the illegal connection. The developer or customer then is required to follow the new connections process to legitimately connect to the network to the correct standards.</p> <p>On the very rare occasions we cannot access land, we will apply for a court order to gain access and disconnect.</p> <p>Waste:</p> <p>Thames Water run our Surface Water Outfall Programme (SWOP) in partnership with the EA which is designed to tackle and improve outfalls polluted by misconnections (foul to surface) and other urban diffuse pollution. Owners of properties where misconnections are identified are contacted and we promote and attempt engagement with owners to voluntarily rectify illegal connections to surface water drains. The privatised Water Industry lacks suitable powers of enforcement for drainage misconnections and the best powers lie in the Building Act. Therefore, cases that fail to rectify need to be escalated to the relevant local authority for enforcement. There are currently no such cases escalated to West Berkshire at this time.</p> <p>We have not had the need to work on any outfalls on SWOP in West Berkshire in recent years, but we're engaged with Catchment Partnership groups and are keen to hear of any outfalls of concern which we will assess and sample to see if it needs inclusion on the programme. Ad-hoc misconnections maybe identified reactively on the back of local reports or other work which are dealt with in the same way.</p> <p>Additionally, we fund Outfall Safaris each year where citizen scientists walk along stretches of watercourses and assess every outfall they find, and the Data is analysed and any outfalls showing pollution are triaged. We had proposed a possible safari in Newbury in the plan if there was support and interest from community or catchment groups.</p>
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6)	<p>Dividend Policy: In light of recent service disruptions and financial challenges, will the company consider a temporary freeze or reduction in shareholder dividends to prioritize investment in infrastructure and service improvements?</p>	<p>Our shareholders have not taken an external dividend for six years (since 2017) to prioritise investment in improving service for customers and to protect the environment. Under the current five-year business plan (2020-2025), we will invest £2bn more than we were awarded at PR19, with no external dividends paid or planned to be paid to shareholders. Our business plan for 2025-2030 assumes no external dividends will be paid to shareholders in this period either. The only dividend payments Thames Water has made since 2017 are internal payments to our parent company, to facilitate debt and pension obligations. This money does not go to shareholders.</p>
7)	<p>Investment Priorities: Given the significant financial burden of addressing the company's infrastructure issues, how will Thames Water prioritise investments between new projects and maintenance of existing assets in West Berkshire?</p>	<p>Thames Water, along with the other water companies within the UK Water industry, submit their 5-year business plan setting out planned investment, the next period under review by the regulator, Ofwat, is for 2025-30, commonly referred to as AMP8.</p> <p>TWUL submitted their AMP8 business plan, for the 2025-30 period, to Ofwat in October 2023. In July 2024 Ofwat provided feedback on the form of their Draft Determination, which fed back on this at the end of August and now await Ofwat's Final Determination on our plan in January 2025.</p>

	<p>Generally speaking, TWUL are funded for base capital expenditure (based on historic industry costs as defined by Ofwat) and enhancement capital expenditure (subject to agreement by Ofwat). Base expenditure is used to support the maintenance of our current assets, whilst enhancement expenditure is used to provide an enhanced service for our customers and the environment.</p> <p>Base expenditure can be spent, for example, on replacing pumps at pumping stations (like for like), inlet screens at treatment works due to asset failure, end of life etc.</p> <p>A key example of an enhancement programme in AMP8 is the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP), looking at, amongst other things, reduction of the phosphorus load being discharged from our treatment works. This includes the addition of new assets to provide phosphorus stripping, such as chemical dosing units. As part of the business plan, we need to submit outline costs to Ofwat for how much we require to fund this enhancement spend. There are regulatory mechanisms surrounding this spend in order to protect customers, ensuring we spend the funding requested for a programme of work is spent on delivering outcomes associated with that programme.</p> <p>When comparing this level of investment at a micro level, as we are required to meet new phosphorus limits as part of the WINEP, and the permit of treatment works will be updated accordingly, we are required to use the funding requested to deliver this phosphorus outcome. As a result, and considering what is stated above, this funding cannot be used for capital maintenance spend funded through base expenditure within the regulatory framework TWUL operates within.</p> <p>We are awaiting Ofwat's final determination on our 5-year business plan for the period 2025-2030. This plan consists of sub-programmes of capital investment with targeted outcomes. For the waste side of the business these are:</p> <p>Waste Asset Assurance Programme (WAAP) - This programme is targeted at ensuring our wastewater treatment works are compliant with certain aspects of our environmental permits whilst increasing the wastewater treatment capacity at our works.</p>
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8)	<p>Debt Management: What strategies is Thames Water implementing to reduce its debt burden and improve its financial stability?</p>	<p>We will provide an update on our financial position in the presentation at the scrutiny meeting.</p>
9)	<p>Investment in Infrastructure: How will Thames Water ensure that its investment in infrastructure is sufficient to meet the long-term needs of its customers in West Berkshire, particularly in areas in Newbury and Lambourn Valley, Thatcham which are prone to flooding and pollution?</p>	<p>Thames Water, along with the other water companies within the UK Water industry, submit their 5-year business plan setting out planned investment, the next period under review by the regulator, Ofwat, is for 2025-30, commonly referred to as AMP8.</p> <p>TWUL submitted their AMP8 business plan, for the 2025-30 period, to Ofwat in October 2023. In July 2024 Ofwat provided feedback on the form of their Draft Determination, which fed back on this at the end of August and now await Ofwat's Final Determination on our plan in January 2025.</p>

		<p>TWUL proposed a £23 billion business plan, across London and the Thames Valley and Home Counties, to maintain and improve our clean water supply and wastewater collection services, including investment to improve the environment. Our five year plan, as submitted in October 2023, is set out here: https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan.</p> <p>Ofwat will make their Final Determination on our plan in January 2025, setting out the level investment /performance expected for the next 5 years. Our submitted plan includes ~£800 million for reducing storm overflows, and a 30% reduction target in total pollution incidents from 2025.</p> <p>Once we understand the investment for the next 5-years, we will prioritise this spend to achieve the required performance. A risk-based approach is taken to understand priorities across the entire Thames Water Estate. We use historic data as well as future trends to understand risk at a micro level, with prioritisation and investment decisions made at a programme level to ensure customer's money is spent efficiently. This exercise will be carried out based off of Ofwat's Final Determination, which will allow us to understand the planned investment for West Berkshire throughout the next 5-years.</p>
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10)

Service Disruptions: What specific steps is Thames Water taking to prevent and mitigate future service disruptions in West Berkshire, such as water shortages? (Every summer there is a hose pipe ban and sewage overflows

To help reduce the risk of supply interruptions caused by peak summer and/or prolonged dry weather, Thames Water is ramping up the rollout of smart water meters across homes and businesses in West Berkshire, and all Thames Valley water resource zones. Across the entire Thames region, we have already installed >1m smart meters to date.

Our programme will install a further 1.1m smart water meters between 2025-30. In West Berkshire this includes all businesses, all meterable homes that are currently unmeasured, and replacing tens of thousands of older household meters with new smart meters.

We will be introducing new digital customer engagement capabilities, with smart metred households receiving regular email abouts about their usage. This enhanced capability will also contact all households with ‘continuous flow’ leaks (eg. leaky-loos) with advice on how many water could be saved and what remedy actions are available to them.

Households that are high water users will also be contacted to receive a free Smarter Home Visit (SHV) which installs water saving devices, provides tailored behaviour change report and fixes internal wastage leaks for free.

Our Smarter Business Visit (SBV) programme will increase from 2025 onwards, where our water efficiency plumbing team will be helping businesses fix internal leaks and improve the water performance of bathrooms and kitchens, as part of the national water target agenda. The SBV programme can also quickly mobilise to specific areas in response to supply-demand challenges, to deliver measurable water savings in specific business areas.

We will also continue our ‘always-on’ approach to customer engagement and water efficiency marketing through all media channels. This customer engagement and

media outreach effort would increase significantly during peak summer and/or dry periods, to increase awareness and reduce the risk of water restriction measures.

We have invested in our Water Treatment works and the list below are projects that are in flight or soon to start:

- Fobney (not in West Berks, but supplies Fringes of region and Newbury): New run to waste project to improve resilience.
- Ufton Nervet – new contact tank and run to waste. General asset renewal. Improvements to quality and resilience.
- Pangbourne – New disinfection system being installed imminently. Improving water quality and resilience.
- Bishops Green – new filtration plant being installed to improve water quality and resilience.
- Bradfield – general improvements made on site to improve power resilience working with local power company.
- In general greater frequency of service reservoir cleaning and refurbishments taking place to reduce the risk of ingress and subsequent asset failure. Customers may see additional activity at our reservoirs.

Since 2015 we delivered 355 projects worth over £24m in our water treatment works and reservoirs which supply water to West Berks.

Since 2020, 10.3 kilometres of water mains have been replaced at 33 locations across West Berks. We are planning to replace 3.53 km of water mains in 2025/26 at the following locations:

Newbury Rd, Hungerford – 1,800m

Northfields, Newbury – 1,500m

Park Terrace, Newbury – 230m

Future schemes beyond 2026 have not yet been developed.

Since 2022 we have lost supplies to customers (events impacting >25 properties) 44 times. In 2024 we seen a proportional increase in supply interruptions but a reduced customer impact time. The increased interruptions are largely due to pipes bursting, the improved restoration times are due to process changes related to supply restoration.

Calendar year	Property Hours	Count of Interruption events
2022	27967	13
2023	16309	16
2024	8154	15
Grand Total	52430	44

West Berks represents approximately 7% of the properties in Thames Valley region. The time our customers are impacted by supply interruptions is below the regional average.

Year	MM:SS per property	% of Thames Valley
Y3	00:25	3%
Y4	00:17	2%
Y5 to date	00:05	4%

11) What are the underlying causes of the frequent service disruptions in West Berkshire and Newbury?

Service disruptions are often caused by reactive leaks. This means the leak is so severe it impacts customers supplies very quickly.

We also repair leaks that are not immediately impacting customer supplies.

Sometimes we need to “shut the main” in order to repair it safely and this can cause supply disruptions, although we do our best to bring alternative water supplies into

		<p>the impacted community. We adopt the same approach for installing new assets and pipes when we need to “shut the main” in order to carry out work safely.</p> <p>Leaks typically occur for the following 3 reasons.</p> <p>Asset has deteriorated – such as a burst pipe or a failed pump due to the condition of the asset.</p> <p>Pressure has changed – pipes and valves operate under huge pressure force and changes in this pressure can cause pipes to burst.</p> <p>Ground movement – when the ground gets very wet, very dry or subject to a freeze and rapid thaw, the ground tends to move and this can cause pipe fractures.</p> <p>Recent outbreak of leakage is largely related to ground movement caused by very wet conditions and pipe deterioration. Such outbreaks are often relatively short in duration but have an impact to local communities.</p> <p>Leakage over the last 3 years have reduced by 4.6 megalitres per day (annualised average). In December 2021 leakage peaked at 28.64 megalitres per day to 17.7 megalitres per day at the end of September 2024.</p>
12)	<p>Customer Compensation: What measures are in place to ensure fair and timely compensation for customers affected by service disruptions?</p>	<p>The Water Supply & Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2017 provide details of the minimum levels of service (aka GSS – Guaranteed Standards Scheme) that we need to provide customers and payments made if we do not adhere to the standards. For service disruptions these mainly fall into standards for failing to provide an adequate water supply or if flooding occurs as a result of the public sewer system surcharging. More detail is below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a householders supply is interrupted due to a burst water main (or other unforeseen circumstances) then we will pay £30 for each complete period of 12hrs that water supplies are interrupted • If the water pressure to a customers property falls below 7m/h for two occasions (of a least 1hr duration) within a 28 day period we will make a payment of £30. This is only paid once per billing year and is not applicable if the low pressure is related to a supply outage.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a customer's house is flooded from sewage that escaped from the public sewers (note: this is not road gullies or watercourses) then we will make a payment equivalent to the annual wastewater charges for the property. (Minimum £150 to maximum of £1000) • If a customer's garden or detached garage is flooded from sewage that escaped from the public sewers (note: this is not road gullies or watercourses) then we will make a payment equivalent to 50% of the annual wastewater charges for the property. (Minimum £75 to maximum of £500). To receive this the customer must demonstrate in writing that they were 'materially affected' and claim within three months. <p>They are of course other standards within GSS which can be found on our website.</p>
12)	Can you describe the process for customers to claim compensation for service disruptions, and how long does it typically take to receive payment?	Most GSS payments are made automatically by us as credits to the water services account within 20 working days of the incident so there is no need for the customer to do anything. The team will write to the customer to inform of the payment. The exception is the external sewer flooding standard which requires the customer to claim from us. If they call then details of the forms required to complete will be sent out.
14)	How is Thames Water ensuring transparency in its communication with customers about service disruptions and compensation claims?	We are obliged to provide customers with a written statement each year of these standards. This is included on or with the annual bills that we send out. Details are also available on our website.
15)	Environmental Impact: How is Thames Water addressing the environmental impact of its operations, including pollution in Lambourn, Kennet and Pang rivers, water abstraction, and climate change?"	There is a program of actions that water companies in England must undertake to meet their environmental obligations, this programme is called The Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP). The WINEP is developed by the Environment Agency and Natural England in consultation with water companies. The programme will allow for investment in programmes to reduce storm overflows, improve bathing water quality and address abstraction that impacts chalk streams for example. Funding for this programme is part of the overall sum we've submitted at

		<p>part of our PR24 business plan submission to our regulators which we expect to receive a final decision on in December this year.</p> <p>Total Pollutions West Berks (Jamie) - In the last three years there have been 41 Category 1-3 pollution incidents recorded on NIRS from waste assets. In 2021, there were 8 associated with the sewer network and 7 from sewage treatment works. In 2022, there were 2 from the sewer network and 11 STW and in 2023 there were 5 networks and 8 STW. There have been no pollution incidents associated with sewage pumping stations over this time period.</p> <p>Serious Pollutions West Berks (Emily) - In the last 3 years there has been one serious pollution in West Berks, at Chapel Row STW on 11th September 2023.</p> <p>We take our role in protecting the Environment very seriously and are working hard to reduce the level of pollutions in West Berkshire. Pollution reduction forms a key part of the Thames Water turnaround plan and the large step up in investment over the next 5 years will play a key role in enabling us to achieve these.</p>
16)	<p>Sustainability Goals: What are Thames Water's specific sustainability goals and targets, and how are these being measured and monitored?</p>	<p>Sustainability and Thames Water</p> <p>We've had a longstanding goal to be more sustainable in all areas of our business and this is embedded in our turnaround plan. Sustainability is not an isolated activity that we undertake; it is integrated across all our activities. It is described across the nine sustainability themes of our sustainability policy. These themes affect each element of environment, social and governance; they reflect what we do as a business but also guide how we do it.</p> <p>Environment – The world around us sustains us and so we all have a</p>

responsibility to look after it today and for future generations. We rely on our rivers, and the groundwater sources that provide much of their flow, for the safe, clean and wholesome drinking water we provide to our customers. We also bear a huge responsibility in treating the wastewater to a standard that can be safely discharged back to those same rivers.

Social – We want to be a positive force for good in our communities and we have great opportunities to do this. We're focused on making sure we look after and support our people as part of 'Team Thames', as well as being a responsible and respected part of the local communities we serve.

Governance – We take our responsibilities as a monopoly provider of an essential service very seriously. We're committed to the highest levels of governance and being led by our Purpose in everything we do.

It would be worth highlighting pages 3-7 of the Sustainability Report and ESG Statement <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/investors/our-results/2024-reports/thames-water-sustainability-report-and-esg-statement-2023-24.pdf> . It also links to the UNSDGs.

The rest to the report has case studies of things that we are doing.

Our sustainability policy can be found here <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/governance/our-policies/sustainability/sustainability-policy.pdf>

17)	<p>Water Conservation: What initiatives is Thames Water undertaking to promote water conservation among its customers and reduce water wastage?"</p>	<p>Thames Water is continuing the rollout of smart water meters across homes and businesses. With >1m smart meters installed to date, our programme will install a further 1.1m smart water meters between 2025-30. In West Berkshire this includes all businesses, all meterable homes that are currently unmeasured, and replacing tens of thousands of older household meters with new smart meters.</p> <p>We will be introducing new digital customer engagement capabilities, with smart metred households received regular email abouts about their usage. This enhanced capability will also contact all households with ‘continuous flow’ leaks (eg. leaky-loos) with advice on how many water could be saved and what remedy actions are available to them.</p> <p>Households that are high water users will also be contacted to receive a free ‘Smarter Home Visit’ which installs water saving devices, provides tailored behaviour change report and fixes internal wastage leaks for free.</p> <p>Our Smarter Business Visit programme will increase from 2025 onwards, where our water efficiency plumbing team will be helping business fix internal leaks and improve the water performance of bathrooms and kitchens, as part of the national water target agenda.</p> <p>We will also continue our ‘always-on’ approach to customer engagement and water efficiency marketing through all media channels.</p>
18)	<p>Who is legally responsible for the sewage plant in Thatcham? Some time ago Thatcham Town Council received notification through the planning system of a change of statutory undertaking to an investment company.</p>	<p>Thames Water is legally responsible for the plant at Thatcham. The notification refers to a NAV (New Appointment and Variation) company ‘Icosa’. They have applied to and have been appointed by OFWAT to provide water and sewer services for a specific development of 91 houses at Lower Way, Thatcham RG19 3RP. This means that they have the same legal standing as the statutory undertaker and have a commercial ‘bulk discharge’ agreement with Thames Water.</p>
19)	<p>Why is Thames Water paying two companies i.e. Its holding companies Kemble Eurobond and Thames Water Ltd at total of £158.3 million when, as declared by Thames Water</p>	<p>https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/investors/our-results/2024-reports/thames-water-annual-report-2023-24.pdf Page 3</p>

	itself, it needs to spend huge amounts on failing infrastructure?	
20)	What commitments and responsibilities do TW/EA have on monitoring the water courses and ensuring that water can safely drain away?	<p>Section.82 of the Environment Act 2021 requires sewerage undertakers to continuously monitor the quality of the receiving water upstream and downstream of their assets. This new requirement, taking effect from 2025, will require us to assess the impact of discharges from our assets on the receiving watercourse. The Act also sets a target to monitor at least 25% of assets by the end of 2030, with further targets to be delivered by 2035.</p> <p>Maintenance of watercourses would usually sit with the riparian owner or EA depending on the watercourse.</p>
21)	What are the service level agreements for responses to issues raised – typically blockages or items that would prevent draining water?	<p>Our attendance times advised to customers on their initial report to us online or the phone can be altered dependant on the volumes of contact received at the time.</p> <p>Our standard response time are</p> <p>Blockage investigation – 48 hours</p> <p>External flooding - 24 hours</p> <p>Internal flooding or imminent internal flooding investigation – 8 hours</p> <p>Pollution – 1 hour</p> <p>During increased call times e.g. during exceptional wet weather, times alter to</p> <p>Blockage - 72hrs</p> <p>External flood - 48hrs</p> <p>Internal flood or imminent internal flooding - 12hrs</p> <p>Pollution - 2hrs</p> <p>We need to advise during exceptional weather we may still not be able to reach our customers in these time frames. If we are likely to miss the timescale the customer will be contacted and advised.</p>

22)	What levels of sewerage overflow into streams are considered safe?	<p>We would never state a safe level. There are many sources of discharge into a watercourse as well as TW.</p> <p>The impact at each location and discharge will vary, and storm overflows are one of many different factors which might determine water quality, or if it's safe to enter the water. Other factors include runoff from farming, industry and roads, and bacteria and parasites from livestock and other animals.</p> <p>The government has set a target of no more than 10 discharges on average, per overflow per year by 2050, with more stringent targets for designated bathing waters. We're planning to meet all government targets for reducing storm overflows. You can find the detail of our storm overflow action plan here - Investing in river health Environment Thames Water</p>
23)	How many times were rivers in West Berkshire polluted in the last year?	<p>Total Pollutions West Berks - In the last three years there have been 41 Category 1-3 pollution incidents recorded on NIRS from waste assets. In 2021, there were 8 associated with the sewer network and 7 from sewage treatment works. In 2022, there were 2 from the sewer network and 11 STW and in 2023 there were 5 networks and 8 STW. There have been no pollution incidents associated with sewage pumping stations over this time period.</p>
24)	What is TW/EA responsibility on restoration of the water course?	<p>Following a pollution incident, TW will work with the EA to determine what if any work is required to recover the water course and in most cases the water course will recover naturally.</p>
24)	Thatcham Sewage works are at capacity and yet West Berkshire Council are planning to put an extra 2,500 houses in North East Thatcham and South West Midgham. Where is the new sewage works going to be built to take on a new town's worth of sewage? It is my understanding that planning for new Local Plans constructed by District Councils does not need to take account of sewage issues through proven feasibility studies on capacity, etc – is this correct?	<p>In the process of preparing their Local Plans, Local Authorities are expected to demonstrate how they are addressing strategic issues which they manage under the 'duty to cooperate'. Whilst not being a statutory consultee, Thames Water are consulted at both Reg 18 and Reg 19 stages where we will provide high level comments regarding the serviceability of new developments planned within the catchment. These high-level comments are not underpinned by formal feasibility studies.</p>

		<p>Once a Local Plan has been agreed, TW will respond to all subsequent Third-Party Planning applications we are consulted on by the Local Authority. It should be noted that TW are not statutory consultees so we are dependent on Local Planning Authorities consulting with us on all major Third Party Planning applications to provide us with the opportunity to comment and raise any potential capacity concerns with our water and wastewater systems. If we do identify that we have capacity concerns, we request that the Planning Authority applies Grampian conditions when approving constrained applications to provide adequate time to deliver increased capacity in our network.</p> <p>Where we identify constraints with our network and planning permission has been granted (or we're confident that planning approval is imminent), these will then undergo hydraulic modelling to determine the scale of potential network detriment. We have mechanisms in place whereby the hydraulic modelling and subsequent network reinforcement can be progressed in a timely fashion, with network upgrades generally being paid for by developers in relation to levies of infrastructure charges for all new properties connecting to the network for the first time. Where we have identified capacity concerns for new developments, we will look to work with the developer to agree a phasing plan to align the rate of housing development with the increase in network capacity.</p> <p>It is therefore imperative that LPA's continue to consult with us and apply the planning conditions we request to ensure we are protecting our existing customers and the environment by providing Thames Water a adequate time to deliver necessary upgrades.</p> <p>Along with other data sources, we use Local Plan domestic and commercial development trajectories to forecast increase in flows arriving at our sewage treatment works to assess if upgrades are required to provide further treatment capacity.</p>
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26)	<p>Floral Way drainage in North East Thatcham was designed with 50% extra capacity when built – however North East Thatcham development of 2,500 extra houses uphill and to the north is significantly more than that extra capacity – with recent monsoon like weather, which will only get worse. Has Thames Water completed adequate feasibility studies to prove drainage will cope without, yet again, putting extra strain on the public purse for a developer's bottom line benefit?</p>	<p>Please see response to the question above.</p>
27)	<p>Woolhampton is expected to have an additional 16 houses at the west end of the village. The</p>	<p>The Woolhampton SPS performs well during normal conditions and there is capacity available for the proposed development. This issue that we experience with the SPS is</p>

	<p>local sewage pumping station and sewage works struggles to cope during prolonged wet weather. What is being done to compensate for this extra housing.</p>	<p>due to external flooding from the drain that flows to the river NE of the SPS. During heavy rainfall, flood water enters the manhole leading up to the SPS meaning the SPS is working to full capacity.</p> <p>There is not a capacity issue at the receiving sewage treatment works regarding the final treatment of the flows from this development</p>
28)	<p>Standford Dingley regularly floods from the Thames Water sewers in the middle of the village. Villagers in spring and winter were regularly out through the night and then the following day trying to stop the damage caused by excess sewage spewing from Thames Water manholes. The Parish council have requested West Berkshire Council to arrange regular storm drain clearances to be reinstated throughout the village (including the roads leading into it which also flooded last week). This will be at the public purse expense. When are the sewage pipes to the village upstream to be appropriately protected from ground water flooding?</p>	<p>We have historically completed - Lining of sections of foul sewer on the road to Chapel Row, Close to the Boot PH installed manhole sealing plates on Jennetts Hill / Cock Lane, lined a section of sewer behind the Pot kiln PH, sealed 6 manhole chambers on the section of sewer close to Magpie Farm. Last year we completed lining of 451m of lining and injection sealed 15 manhole chambers, from outside The Bull PH to the junction with lane to the sewage pumping station.</p> <p>We are sealing the storm tank by the pumping station to prevent infiltration; work is due to commence 30 September.</p> <p>Recent investigations into the Burnt hill area have not shown any infiltration on this section of sewer.</p> <p>When we locate areas where groundwater is infiltrating the sewer, a business case is used to demonstrate the need for investment in lining sections of the sewer. Until the locations are discovered this cannot be taken forward, as yet our investigations either now or historically, have not shown any additional areas for lining but these invg will continue.</p> <p>Highways drainage is the responsibility of the LA and they need to both suck out the gullies as well as investigate the pipework between gullies and to the watercourse. This should be fully maintained to allow surface water from the roads to drain away and not inundate TW manholes. Together this will help to keep the water in the right place.</p>
29)	<p>Also, Stanford Dingley village has a 2 hour SLA for tankers when flooding occurs - which is often breached by TW. In one case alone, TW only arrived to pump out the pumping station</p>	<p>We prioritise where our tankers attend in relation to the impact on our customers and the environment including internal flooding, external flooding and pollutions. Please see service levels set out in one of the responses above. In extreme weather conditions, we are unable to promise any area an SLA for a tanker attendance, as it</p>

	two weeks after the issue! What assurances is the village to get on better performance?	will depend on other activities and priorities across the Thames Water area. This has been updated in correspondence to the parish council.
30)	Tylers Lane sewage plant in Bucklebury Parish does not have a discharge monitor. When will this be remediated?	Tylers Lane STW hasn't got an EDM (Event Duration Monitor) because the site hasn't got a storm permit or any storm management assets. It is a 'treat-all' site, therefore will never have one.
31)	Briff Lane, Bucklebury has a constant stream of tankers to take sewage to Thatcham (which is already at capacity). When will this be remediated?	The tankers were because of planned maintenance taking place in July, this work has been completed. We refurbished and replaced the media in the trickling filters, and tankered all flows, to protect the environment, during the work. This lasted one week in July.
32)	Chapel Row sewage works regularly overflows into the River Bourne. What assurances are there that the new works will be adequate to prevent this occurring again? How have the sewage pipes been inspected for groundwater flooding? And if so, what pipework remediation will be carried out to prevent it in the future?	<p>Thames Water believes that all discharges of partially treated sewage from storm overflows are unacceptable. There is not a quick fix to address storm overflow events, and it will require investment over a long period of time. Thames Water, along with the rest of the water industry, have a 25-year storm overflow reduction plan.</p> <p>Every five years, Thames Water, along with the other water companies within the industry, are required to submit a business plan to set out their planned investment for the subsequent 5-years.</p> <p>TWUL submitted their business plan for the 2025 to 2030 period (AMP8) to Ofwat in October 2023, and we are awaiting the regulator's outcome, due by late December 2024. As part of this submission, TWUL submitted a plan outlining ~£800 million investment to reduce storm overflows.</p> <p>There is an ongoing project which will increase the treatment capacity and will provide some benefit to reducing storm overflows at Chapel Row STW. The primary aim of this project is not to reduce storm overflow events. This project is currently forecasted to be complete early AMP8.</p>

		<p>We recognise that the environment and the water cycle are interlinked, and it can be difficult to separate out. There are various Risk Management Authorities who have different statutory duties with regards to managing water. Thames Water are not a statutory undertaker re: groundwater flooding. However, we would look to work with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), who are statutory responsible for managing groundwater, in understanding what the best mitigations are for our customers and the environment.</p> <p>Sewage pipes, are not always inspected for g/w. We only check our foul network once we are aware that there are issues in the catchment and customer internal flooding and pollution events. We are not aware of customer flooding/pollution in this area. Can we have some more info and postcodes for the properties.</p>
<p>33)</p>	<p>West Berkshire Council successfully prosecuted Thames water for unauthorised road works in Pangbourne earlier this year. Despite this there have been at least three sets of unauthorised, non-emergency road works in the village since the fines. What does this tell us about Thames water' respect for regulations and for the people of the communities it purports to serve?</p>	<p>We were prosecuted in Sep 23 for works undertaken in Dec 22 (working without a permit) & Jan 23 (failure to manually control lights)</p> <p>We pleaded guilty to both offences and were fined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to manually control lights - £1,650 • Working without a permit - £3,300 • Victim surcharge - £1,980 • Costs - £3,293.02 <p>The total £10,223.02</p> <p>Non-compliance to the Streetworks Act can result in Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN). To work legally we make an application for a “permit” to work in the highway, these permits are managed by the local authority Streetworks team.</p> <p>We have received 3 FPN's from West Berks in the past 12 months:</p> <p>29 Sept 23 – Immediate Works Notice Received Late (The Elephant)</p> <p>25 July 24 – Immediate Works Notice Received Late (High St, Pangbourne)</p> <p>06 Aug 24 Immediate Works Notice Received Late (Green Lane).</p>

		<p>In this period Thames Water requested 2,647 permits to work in the highway.</p> <p>Thames Water and it's partners work very hard be compliant to legislation and operate safely and we take this responsibility seriously. Where we have failed to be compliant, we examine the root cause and take reasonable steps to improve compliance in the future.</p>
34)	<p>Having conducted over a year of water quality testing for the Angling Trust, and now with the publication of Action for River Kennet's water quality results from the River Pang, it is clear that even when the combined sewer overflows are not spilling, there is a significant bacterial, nutrient and ammonia load going into the river on a daily basis. As such, will Thames Water reconsider their current refusal to implement phosphate stripping capabilities at Compton and Hampstead Norreys Sewage Treatment Works?</p>	<p>We don't currently have plans to invest in UV treatment or other forms of disinfection to remove the residual bacteria from the effluent from Compton or Hampstead Norreys sewage works. The quality and quantity of the discharge from these works is regulated by an Environmental Permit, and this permit does not impose any parameters in relation to E-coli or other bacteria.</p>
35)	<p>Will all three organisations coordinate to address and eliminate the Trade Waste and pollutant elements issuing from the outfall of the TW culvert (original route across Victoria Park of the Northbrook) at the rear of domestic dwellings along London Rd., Newbury, and if required put in an engineered structure to capture and ultimately to remove pollutants for treatment off site.</p>	<p>Trade Effluent permits are for trade discharge to the foul water sewer system. We do not issue anything for surface water, any pollutants road run off, eg tyre break down discharges through the system,</p> <p>If there has been an illegal discharge from a third party through this system, once we are aware, ie this has been reported to us, we will investigate with the EA to locate the source and provide information to the EA.</p>

36)	Are there any plans to achieve “NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY” by the cooperation of the 3 organisations?	To be investigated
37)	Has the EA (or any previous agency) given a permit with limiting conditions of BOD and SS for this discharge, which ultimately drains into River Kennet.	The EA issues TW with its environmental permires and these set out the WQ standards that must be met at each STW. to discharge and any changes to the permit is with the EA.
38)	<p>An extract from letter dated 30th. June 2022 from DLUHC <i>“Local councils are expected to set out in their Local Plan their strategic priorities and policies for the provision of infrastructure, including for flood risk management and wastewater. They should work with other authorities and providers such as water and sewerage companies to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demands.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In view of the above statement, will TW (and WBC) confirm that on ALL planning applications (incl. “windfall” sites, conversions from business to flats) they will demonstrate that the capacity in the sewerage infrastructure (incl. pumping stations (PSt.) and sewage treatment works (STW)) is capable to receive the extra flow 	<p>As explained further up, all developments we are consulted on will undergo impact assessment and we’ll raise capacity concerns and request planning conditions where appropriate which will consider the network and STW’s</p>

	<p>without causing illegal pollution discharges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the event of any deficiencies, the planning application will be deemed premature, and therefore refused, until required capacity is achieved. • TW to answer whether the existing capacities are able to cope with current developments already approved (such as Shaw Valley/Donnington Heights, Sandleford and adjacent Washwater in Hampshire), and if any deficiencies are present, when they will be addressed and full capacities achieved (e.g. Dene Way PSt.). 	<p>If this is asking whether TW would object to planning applications for ‘windfall’ development sites due to capacity constraints, our current position is no, we would not raise an objection</p> <p>Capacity concerns have been identified for the developments at Shaw Valley, Donnington Heights and Sandleford. Upgrade projects will deliver the additional capacity required to support this additional housing before the properties become occupied.</p> <p>We did not identify any capacity concerns with the development in Washwater</p>
39)	<p>Shaw Valley & Donnington Heights New Developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the Upgrade to the Dene Way/Shaw Park Foul Sewage Pumping Station been agreed for the Shaw 401 new dwellings and if so when will it take place? • Please may we have copies of the Foul Sewer Maps that these dwellings 	<p>The upgrade works for Dene Way SPS to accommodate the full development has been agreed and is being delivered by Developer Services Major Projects under project L748 (Project Manager is Ravi Vasant). The project is currently going through procurement with the Delivery Partner. Finalised programme will be confirmed as part of this process.</p> <p>We would be happy to share maps for these sewers where required.</p>

	<p>connect to, including down to main connections or outfall discharge points?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please may we have copies of the Surface Water (Sewer) Pipes that these dwellings connect to, including down to main connections or outfall discharge points? • Are there any plans to produce Surface Water Management Plans for this area including sites put forward under the Local Plan including CA 15 & SCD4? 	<p>To be submitted</p> <p>To be submitted</p> <p>To be confirmed</p>
<p>40)</p>	<p>Walton Way/Reed Walk/Pike Street/Newport Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for the work you have undertaken so far in this area and what have you discovered with the further work since undertaking the lining work to the Foul Sewer Pipes along the Northern Park of Walton Way and under Reed Walk? • Did you establish the exact source of the water ingress into those pipes and is there any likelihood that the water could be coming from the river embankment or riverbed? 	<p>Exact points of ingress – our investigation located sections of the sewer where groundwater was getting into the sewers. We are unable to say if this is caused by the riverbank or bed.</p> <p>We have lined 190m in Walton Way, with a further 92m in Walton way and 102m on Pike Street to be completed, provisional start date 21/10, however this is weather dependant.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any plans for the Walton Way Pumping Station? • For the Top of Newport Road – RG14 2AS - are you satisfied that the Foul Network from the back of 96-88 Newport Road, through the parking areas, into St. Richards Road and to the main connection point (Manhole 7001) on Shaw Road is operating correctly without GWIS problems, as the area floods and surface water drainage network is old? 	<p>No plans for Walton way SPS, the site is working as designed the issue is the ingress of groundwater into the network. It has however had a winter readiness</p> <p>We are arranging for a sewer clean and CCTV survey of all TW sections of foul water sewers at the top of Newport Rd , this will make sure that the sewer are cleaned and free of debris incorrectly disposed of in the sewers.</p> <p>Bin it Blockages Help and advice Thames Water</p> <p>RG14 2AS This will form part of our future investigations as the properties are now part of Sec105 sewers, previously not investigated.</p>
<p>41)</p>	<p>London Road/Faraday Road Pumping Station</p> <p>Are Upgrades planned for this Pumping Station and if so in what timescale?</p>	<p>Upgrades are proposed at London Road Pumping Station and the rising mains that discharge flow directly to Newbury STW. The project is live and in progress. The current stage is the identification of the preferred solution. The current programme is for delivery of the pumping station within AMP8 (2025-2030). This is dependent upon the scope of the preferred solution and agreement with key stakeholders, including West Berkshire Council, around working on, and around, the A4 London Road.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any plans to produce Surface Water Management Plans for this Area South of the A4 AND North of the River Kennet? • Are there any plans to produce Surface Water Management Plans for this area South of the Lambourn and North of the A4, as the Surface Water Drainage does not operate properly during periods of heavy rain and there 	<p>Thames Water are not statutory undertakers for managing Surface Water flooding. We would look to work closely with the LLFA who have the statutory responsibility to manage Surface Water flooding.</p>

	are properties at High Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFSW)?	
42)	<p>Newbury Sewage Treatment Works on Lower Way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are upgrades planned for this STW and if so in what timescales? 	<p>There is an ongoing project to improve the asset health of the inlet works.</p> <p>Thames Water, along with the other water companies within the UK Water industry, submit their 5-year business plan setting out planned investment, the next period under review by the regulator, Ofwat, is for 2025-30, commonly referred to as AMP8.</p> <p>TWUL submitted their AMP8 business plan, for the 2025-30 period, to Ofwat in October 2023. In July 2024 Ofwat provided feedback on the form of their Draft Determination, which fed back on this at the end of August and now await Ofwat's Final Determination on our plan in January 2025.</p> <p>As part of our business plan submission, we proposed investment to increase the treatment capacity of Newbury Treatment Works to accommodate for increased flows. This upgrade is planned for the 2025-30 investment period, and is subject to Ofwat's outcome.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it your intention to ensure phases of new residential development are aligned with capacity upgrades, and are the mechanisms in place to ensure this happens, especially for sites that are not allocated in the Local Plan Review? 	<p>When responding to planning applications such as those mentioned, we review the capacity of the receiving sewerage and surface water network (if applicable), the impacts to any pumping stations within the catchment and the risk to our treatment facilities. We cross reference the emerging growth against our forecasted growth within the catchment using our Strategic Overview of Long-term Assets and Resources model that has been prepared utilising the Local Authorities current local plan to ensure that developments are in line with our expectations and don't out strip our capacity to treat</p>
43)	<p>TW claim that groundwater infiltration from private drains feeding into their sewers is a significant problem as TW cannot enforce property owners to undertake corrective action. However, WBC do have the powers, if they are made aware. Sometimes corrective action is not possible.</p>	<p>Corrective action is always possible it might come as very high cost. We are speaking with our legal teams in regard what we can say to our customers and how many times we must write to them. Currently we must write 5 times to them before we can pass over to the LA. In some cases, the customer will make the correction on their pipes. It can take a considerable number of time/years to go through the process. Any help from the LA would be appreciated. If during our investigations, we pinpoint a private lateral with high groundwater infiltration. We will have a discussion with the property owner, advising the results of our investigation and the impact and methods to</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After this subject was raised last year, what progress has been made in establishing a formal procedure whereby TW, WBC and EA communicate and co-operate to find solutions to help prevent sewer flooding from private drain infiltration? <p>To help focus, I suggest the parties use the following possible case study to examine how such a procedure works to produce a solution:</p> <p>A property suffers from groundwater flooding and has a sump pump to take the water away. The river Lambourn is close by, but on the opposite side of a road.</p> <p>TW don't permit the water to be diverted into the sewer, and Highways don't allow it to be pumped onto the road. EA doesn't take kindly to it being pumped into the river, even if Highways allowed it to be piped across the road via a flat hose. Where is the water supposed to go?</p>	<p>prevent the groundwater impact eg lining. Verbally and then by letter requesting they take action to prevent this. We would then need to give them the time to complete work on their pipe before re- attending and checking if work has been completed to stop the infiltration.</p> <p>The local authority has the required enforcement powers.</p> <p>Case Study: can LA write to all residents requesting that they look at their own individual pipes and look for infiltration, if found can they line these pipes. Also, can property owners look at where their down pips drain and make sure these are not miss connected.</p> <p>Re pumping of groundwater from a property e.g. basement into a foul sewer we would tell the customers they are not allowed to pump this into our foul water sewer network.</p> <p>The EA and lead local authority would be able to advise where this is discharged to, if to land is not an option, this is not for TW to advise. The EA would advise about pumping into watercourses.</p> <p>This is the big question for now and future of flooding. Where should the water go to?</p>
44)	<p>Pang Valley/Stanford Dingley Questions</p> <p>Unfortunately, we don't currently think we have anyone who can attend on the actual evening of</p>	<p>Re Burnt Hill see the above information</p> <p>Question 1</p>

<p>the Scrutiny Commission as most of us already have prior commitments. However, we look forward to receiving a written response from Thames Water to our question for this meeting - noted below, in due course. (This would be an improvement on the last meeting as we didn't actually get an official response to our questions.)</p> <p>Our questions from last September included asking for all of the sewer data loggers around the Stanford Dingley area to <i>remain in place, and any loggers that were not transmitting to be fixed.</i></p> <p><i>We continue to believe that during certain high groundwater/high rainfall scenarios that there is infiltration into the sewer from areas such as Burnt Hill and from the area around the Pot Kiln and the Gutter Row sink hole. We have also observed high sewer levels near the Boot after storms.</i></p> <p>Please note that when you do have manhole sewer logging data, that has been provided to us. We plot that data alongside rainfall, groundwater levels and when we have recorded that there was a sewer overflow in Stanford Dingley on https://www.floodalleviation.uk/dashboard/stw/ - so that we can readily see when there were</p>	<p>Thames Water believes that monitoring is an important tool in order to understand our Network and assets a lot more. They provide valuable data across our entire water and wastewater estate to support with understanding the root cause and extent of any issues. This data and insight also supports with prioritisation of operational activities, enabling key Thames Water colleagues to respond quickly to operational events across our estate.</p> <p>We are aware of the difficulties associated with monitors transmitting data. Part of the problem is associated with mobile coverage across different regions. As part of our AMP7 programme, we have been trialling new ways of improving communication from sewer depth monitors, including moving the antenna and data logger into bollards above ground, with the monitor itself still being within the sewer. This should support with improving communication problems.</p> <p>For the sewer depth monitors in Stanford Dingley, we are looking to move the below ground antenna and loggers to above ground bollards early in year 1 of AMP8.</p> <p>Question 2</p> <p>Within the Stanford Dingley catchment, we have carried out surveys, including impermeable area surveys, to understand more about the mechanisms of unwanted flow entering the foul network.</p> <p>As of October 2023, we had lined 400m of sewers and sealed 15 manholes to support with infiltration reduction. This year, we have carried out further work to seal the storm tank, including entry points and chambers. This work has been paused due to the rising groundwater levels.</p> <p>Installation of sewer depth monitors provide us with a greater amount of data to provide insight and support with investigations. The data collected from sewer depth monitors, along with regular conversations with local stakeholders, the parish council, and customers, has highlighted that further investigations are required.</p>
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sewer surges (perhaps better than your team can see).

At the last Scrutiny meeting in 2023, Karen Nelson (TW) committed to ensure that all sewer data loggers were being properly maintained and were transmitting reliable data. This is still not happening. The most recent 6 months of data we received from TW shows that they have at least 6 key data loggers that require maintenance. Some have missing data or are currently not recording.

QUESTION 1: Accurate, comprehensive, widespread and reliable sewer logger data is key to tracing where the ingress problem occurs which causes the never ending sewer flooding in Stanford Dingley. TW pledged to get the loggers maintained and transmitting reliably. They have had a year to sort this out. Why is this still not being managed?

QUESTION 2: Given the data that you do have (and which we also have), what conclusions have TW drawn so far, as the most likely cause of the surges in the sewer levels that have been observed and what will TW do about it?