

SESRO Statutory Consultation Feedback Form



Have your say

We would like your views on our current proposals. You can find out more about the project and view the consultation materials on our statutory consultation website at www.thames-sro.co.uk/sesro/statcon2025

You can have your say by filling in this feedback form and posting it to us free of charge at **FREEPOST SESRO CONSULTATION**. Alternatively, you can:

- Fill in the online feedback form, which you can find at www.ipsos.uk/SESRO
- Email our dedicated consultation response inbox at SESRO@ipsos.com

All responses must be received by **11.59pm on Tuesday 13 January 2026**. Responses received after that date may not be considered. We cannot guarantee acceptance of consultation responses submitted via channels other than those listed above. If you need help filling in this feedback form, or have any questions, contact us via info.SESRO@thameswater.co.uk or via our dedicated consultation phone messaging service on **0800 033 6677**.

If you'd like us to be able to update you about the project, please provide your email address:

jrichardson@britishmarine.co.uk

You can opt out from receiving updates from us at any time by emailing us at info.SESRO@thameswater.co.uk

If you don't want us to contact you again, please tick this box

Privacy

Confidentiality and data protection: Thames Water and its partners will store and use your personal data in relation to the statutory consultation on SESRO. This is important so we can record accurately and analyse any feedback and/or questions raised.

It also allows us to communicate with you as work progresses and ensures that you can engage throughout the process, including the subsequent stages of work up to the final approval of the project and the process to achieve planning consent.

Our privacy notice covering the use of personal data for consultations can be found at www.thameswater.co.uk/legal/privacy-notice

To find out more about how we use and protect personal data including your data subject rights, visit our statutory consultation website at www.thames-sro.co.uk/sesro/statcon2025

About you

- 1 Please provide your name: **Joanna Richardson, External Affairs Manager**
- 2 What is your postcode? (this helps us better understand feedback) **SO14 3TJ**
- 3 Are you responding on behalf of a business or organisation? **Yes**
- 4 If yes, please include the name of your business or organization **British Marine**
- 5 If yes, what category of organisation or group are you representing? Please select all that apply

- Elected representative (MP, councillor or similar)
- Environment, heritage, amenity or community group
- Local government (county and district councils, parish and town councils and local partnerships)
- Other representative group (including trade unions, political parties and professional bodies)
- Statutory agency
- Real estate, housing associations or property-related organisations
- Transport, infrastructure or utility organisation

Other (please state)

British Marine is the national trade association representing UK's leisure marine industry. We have over 1300 member businesses whose operations range from manufacturing of vessels and marine equipment to a wide range of marine services, including brokerage, chandleries, as well as both coastal and inland marinas as well as hire and passenger boat services.

British Marine members include leisure marine businesses whose livelihoods depend on a safe and navigable River Thames. Our priority is to safeguard the interests of our members and to work with government, its agencies, and other organisations to enable the continued success of the industry and thus maintain the significant social, environmental and economic contribution it makes to the country.

- Prefer not to say

If you are providing a response on behalf of a business or organisation, the name and information about it may be published in our reporting of this statutory consultation.

- 6 How did you hear about this statutory consultation? (tick any that apply to you)

<input type="checkbox"/> Postcard delivered to your address	<input type="checkbox"/> Email from the project team
<input type="checkbox"/> Print or online newspaper advertisement	<input type="checkbox"/> Social media
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotify	<input type="checkbox"/> Other advertisement

Word of mouth

Community group or recreational group

X Other (please state)

brought to our attention by our British Marine Inland Association which includes British Marine member businesses that operate on the non-tidal River Thames.

Please respond to as many or as few questions as you wish.

Consultation questions

7 Please provide us with your comments on our **Indicative Master Plan for the reservoir site**, described on pages 24 to 33 of our Statutory Consultation Brochure.

British Marine recognizes the need to secure water resources given the growing population in the South East and the growing pressures associated with climate change. However, it is disappointed that the Severn Thames Transfer has not been taken forward into Thames Water's preferred regional plans as it had the potential to secure water supply via a restored Thames Severn Canal with all the economic, environmental and social benefits that would have come of restoring 36 miles of canal. Linked to this we are aware that there are many questions currently being raised both locally and nationally as to whether the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) is appropriate and deliverable by Thames Water, as illustrated by the debate in the House of Commons on 6th January 2026. This is partly why we are pleased to note the Severn Thames Transfer, including its various options, remain within the adaptive pathway regional plans and will be kept under review should SESRO prove undeliverable or unable to meet future demand.

In regard to SESRO's Indicative Master Plan we very much welcome its proposals for recreational facilities, especially those that would support watersports, although ensuring such benefits are delivered should, in our view, be critical for securing development consent – see further comments in response to Q 12 below.

British Marine also has a number of serious concerns as to how the reservoir would actually work and specifically the impact its design and operations could have on navigation on the River Thames – our concerns, along with the assurances we seek, are expanded under Q 8 and 9 below.

We are also concerned that environmental features, specifically the plans for the Wilts and Berks Canal do not go far enough – see comments Q 10 below.

8 To guide our future design work, we've developed draft Design Principles which can be found on pages 30 to 31 of our Statutory Consultation Brochure, and in our draft Design Principles document. Please provide us with your comments on our **draft Design Principles**.

We note that Page 12 of the consultation brochure sets out how the reservoir would work in terms pumping water from the River Thames into the reservoir when river flows are high. However, British Marine is concerned that, unless effectively managed in consultation with key stakeholders, there is a risk that water abstraction could take place causing a risk to navigation on the River.

Re water abstraction - We are mindful that there are times when abstraction of water into Farmor reservoir has precedence over navigation and takes place to the point where river levels are consequently too shallow for navigation in the reach of the river where the abstraction point is located. Therefore, on behalf of the our members on the Thames, British Marine seeks assurance from Thames Water that as the operator of the planned reservoir, it will agree to work closely with the Environment Agency, as the navigation authority. We also ask that it works with relevant representatives from British Marine Inland Association, to help ensure minimum river levels are maintained for navigation as this critical to the continued livelihoods of many inland marine businesses operating on the river. We believe an agreement to consult the navigation authority and businesses operating on the river re water abstraction should be a prerequisite for development consent.

Re water outfall - British Marine is also concerned that water released back into the river could increase the flows to such an extent that in tricky areas on the river, or at times of variable flows due to weather conditions, the additional water released from the reservoir could make navigation difficult or even hazardous. Our members are concerned that the actual

point of release of water from the reservoir back into the river will have strong cross river current flows causing difficulty and/or danger to boats attempting to navigate past the outfall.

Therefore, on behalf of the inland marine industry, British Marine seeks assurance from Thames Water that, as a prerequisite for development consent, Thames Water agrees to work closely with the Environment Agency and representatives from British Marine Inland Association on the precise design and location point from where the water will flow back into the river.

Re impact on the width of the river - British Marine is very concerned about any unnecessary narrowing of the river due to the intake and outfall structures. Whilst we note that “further design work is ongoing to minimize the loss of width” it is essential that Thames Water (and indeed Government in assessing the DCO application) understand that narrowing the width of the river will adversely impact boaters, including customers of British Marine Inland member businesses. There is concern amongst our membership that narrowing the river is likely to increase the risk of inexperienced customers taking out hire boats could hit the new structures or collide with boats coming in the opposite direction. There is insufficient information available to know whether there will be sufficient room for safe navigation by wide boats, such as maintenance barges, travelling past the narrows. There is also concern that the narrows could result in boats attempting to travel at dangerously high speeds through the narrows at times of high flows and the situation could be further exacerbated by fallen trees and other debris floating down stream and getting caught in these narrows. That could result in blockages and / or boats being damaged by the caught debris.

In the absence of any assurance that these risks can be avoided, we ask that Thames Water amends its plans, so that the structures to abstract and release water into the river are designed within the bank . This would avoid disrupting and potentially putting at risk safe navigation along the river. Failing that, we ask that at the very least, the design of narrowing the river be subject to consultation with the navigation authority and BM representing businesses whose livelihoods depend on safe navigation on the river.

9 Please provide us with your comments on our **current design proposals for the infrastructure needed to operate the reservoir, as well as utility diversions and renewable energy**, described on pages 40 to 63 of our Statutory Consultation Brochure.

This includes the proposed reservoir embankments, tunnels, pumping station, water towers, water treatment works, River Thames intake/outfall, renewable energy and utility diversions and connections.

It is wrong to suggest that, under the ‘socio-economics and communities’ section of the consultation brochure (page 111) the “likely significant adverse impacts” of narrowing of the river near the intake and outfall structure will be sufficiently mitigated by the providing new recreational and leisure facilities. Whilst new additional recreational facilities would be welcomed by some, it would do nothing to mitigate the disruption to existing businesses that currently operate on the River and other existing leisure boating on the Thames. It certainly will not mitigate the risks to British Marine member businesses and their customers navigating on the section of the river where the intake and outfall structures are planned. It is why we urge Thames Water to rethink its design plans for the intake and outfall structures with a view to building them within the bank (see comments under Q8 above).

10 Please provide us with your comments on our **current proposals for the reservoir's environmental features**, described on pages 64 to 76 of our Statutory Consultation Brochure.

This includes proposed seasonal wetlands, grasslands and woodlands, habitats, priority areas for biodiversity, lagoons and floating islands, watercourse diversions and flood management, and provision for the Wilts & Berks Canal.

British Marine has long supported the full restoration of the Wilts & Berks Canal given the huge opportunities this would offer our members in terms of locating their businesses along the canal and enabling their customers to enjoy that restored waterway. We believe it would further add to the economic contribution of the inland network as evidenced by our own Economic Benefits Report on the UK Marine Industry (published in 2024); the 'Waterways for Today' report by the Inland Waterways Association and the Canal & River Trust's report 'Valuing Our Waterways' (published 2022).

However, we are concerned that the plans set out on page 78 of the SESRO consultation brochure are a significant step back from what Thames Water had initially agreed in the Gate 3 Submission (August 2025). That had promised the delivery of a complete canal route, crucially including waterway connections to the River Thames and with railway and A34 dual carriageway crossings within the DCO.

We share concerns expressed by the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust (WBCT) that should the SESRO go ahead as currently planned it will be practically impossible for WBCT to build their A34 canal underpass. We understand that the impact of SESRO will in effect add £23m of costs on to WBCT as it will be forced to remove 385,000 tonnes of excavated material from Oday Hill which can no longer be used in the canal and will force 1000s of lorry loads on to the roads. It would appear these plans are in contravention with the Local Plan and Development Policy "to ensure associated infrastructure of development does not prejudice the delivery of the canal."

Given the scale and costs of SESRO, we believe the route to the River Thames, as well as the road and rail crossings should be included in the DCO. Opportunities to share routes and the construction of them, so as to reduce the cost of restoring the canal should be delivered through SESRO, in the same way that significant lengths of replacement and restored canal are being delivered through planning conditions for the new housing in Swindon. Given the huge new Grand Union Canal water transfer scheme is going ahead, we would like to understand why Thames Water will not adjust its plans for SESRO so that water from the reservoir to the Thames is transferred via a dual use open air channel which would provide navigation as well as water transfer rather than via single purpose tunnel.

11 Please provide us with your comments on our **current proposals for access to and around the reservoir site**, described on pages 78 to 83 of our Statutory Consultation Brochure.

This includes the proposed main access road, maintenance and emergency access, the Steventon to East Hanney road, works to the wider road network, including the Marcham Interchange and local roads, car parking, construction and operational traffic. We'd also welcome your views on our proposals for active travel and local access, including our proposals for various active travel routes in and around the reservoir site.

12 Please provide us with your comments on our **current proposals for amenity and recreation facilities on the reservoir site**, described on pages 84 to 91 of our Statutory Consultation Brochure.

This includes proposals for recreational lakes and a visitor centre, a water sports centre and a nature education centre.

British Marine very much welcomes the “current proposals” for amenity and recreation facilities on the reservoir site, not least because one of its core objectives is to increase the number of people who participate in boating and other watersports. We especially welcome plans that would facilitate paddleboarding, kayaking and sailing on the planned recreational lakes to the east of the reservoir as these activities are often an accessible entry point into the wider world of boating, be that inland or coastal / offshore boating.

Our concern is there is no guarantee that these valuable benefits will actually be delivered. What assurance can Thames Water provide that these benefits will be an intrinsic part of any plan that goes forward for development? In our view the delivery of these watersport facilities and other social amenities should be a prerequisite for development consent and not merely attractive aspirations that could vanish from the plan beyond this consultation stage.

13 Please provide us with your comments on **how we propose to build the new reservoir**, described on pages 92 to 99 of our Statutory Consultation Brochure.

This includes how we’re planning to manage construction impacts through use of the rail line to bring in materials, our draft Code of Construction Practice, construction access points to the site, planned locations of construction compounds, and construction timeframes.

14 Please provide us with your comments on the **preliminary environmental information**, summarised on pages 100 to 113 of our Statutory Consultation Brochure, contained in our Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report and the PEI Non-Technical Summary.

15 Please provide us with your comments on our **draft sustainability priorities and objectives**, described in our draft report on Delivering a Sustainable Legacy for People and Nature.

16 Please provide us with **any other comments** you would like to make about our proposals. British Marine would be pleased to put Thames Water in touch with relevant members of British Marine who operate businesses on the River Thames to work with Thames Water in helping improve the current plans and minimise any adverse impact SESRO could have to navigation on the river. Should Thames Water wish to take up this offer please email jrichardson@britishmarine.co.uk.

Equality monitoring

These questions are optional. The answers you provide help us understand whether we have received consultation responses from a representative sample of people across the area, including those with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

1 The Equality Act 2010 protects people against discrimination based on nine protected characteristics. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Do you think our proposals will discriminate against or benefit those with protected characteristics?

2 Which of the following best describes your gender?

Male Female Non-binary
 My gender is not listed Prefer not to say

3 What is your age group? If you are under 18, we ask you to tick the box and request that a parent, teacher or guardian signs below to show that they are happy for your response to be considered.

Under 18 19-29 30-39 40-49
 50-59 60-69 70-79 80+

Parent/teacher/guardian name

Parent/teacher/guardian signature

4 Which of the following best describes you?

White

<input type="checkbox"/> English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy or Irish Traveller
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other White background		

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups

<input type="checkbox"/> White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background		

Asian/Asian British

<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background	

Black/African/Caribbean/Black

British

<input type="checkbox"/> African	<input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black/African/ Caribbean background

Other ethnic group

<input type="checkbox"/> Arab	<input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

5 Do you consider yourself or anyone in your household to be officially disabled defined by the Equality Act 2010 as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities'?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking part in our statutory consultation.

