

Kiera Bentley

"I make representation at today's meeting as an elected member of Grove North Ward for The Vale of White Horse District Council.

The SESRO project is massive and my ward is in the potential impact area, yet many of my constituents have had no meaningful engagement and most are totally unaware of the proposals.

The Letcombe Brook is a very special chalk stream that runs through Wantage and Grove. As rare as a rain forest and highly protected, yet the truth is, at 3am this morning for an hour and a half sewage was being discharged into Letcombe Brook. At this moment according to TW's own data sewage is being discharged at Shrivenham, Uffington, Kingston Bagpuise, Appleton, Drayton, Didcot and Abingdon and has been in most cases for the last 7 hours all within 10 miles of the reservoir site!

What faith can residents have in Thames Water about the alleged impact on the area regarding nature recovery? At 2 recent information events I attended, I was told conflicting outcomes regarding the dangers around bund failure and emergency planning. I would suggest that the truth is, the modelling has not been done and if it has, the results are too stark for the public to hear.

Maybe washing away of our smaller Parishes is considered acceptable collateral damage but surely the public has a right to know all the information and to be consulted using accurate figures? Meaningful discussion with the public has not taken place on the proposed current size and all the information is not available.

This project should go no further without a public enquiry and proper scrutiny.

The fact is if this project goes ahead, all the Councillors that did not object or call the water companies to proper account.... if you did not demand a public enquiry and insist due diligence was as comprehensive as you have the power to call then you must hold your head in shame when the next generations come and say "How was this allowed to happen?" Will you be putting your hand on your heart and know you did all you could today?

As Bethia Thomas, Leader of the Vale District Council, said, 'It's ridiculous to think that a giant Reservoir dominating our countryside, impacting our environment and involving significant financial and carbon costs could be considered the best solution".

We should be focusing on fast tracking less disruptive alternatives; fixing leaks, educating for reducing consumption and exploring the use of transfers etc.

I challenge members of this committee to make their vote count today and insist a public enquiry is held and support today's motion.

I suggest this project is not about capacity and need, this is about profit and greed.

Sort out your out-dated, leaking supply system. Stop trying to deceive the locals and start investing the money paid to your shareholders and fix the current failings."

