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Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and
Rural Affairs
Thames Water Water Resources Management Plan
Consultation
Water Resources
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Area 3D
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group
150 Edinburgh Avenue ■ Slough
Berkshire ■ SL1 4SS
Tel: +44 (0)1753 870500
Fax: +44 (0)1753 870501
www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk

Submitted via email: water.resources@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Secretary of State

Consultation on Thames Water draft water resources management plan

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Thames Water Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2019.

We have reviewed the document and our response is set out below:

The Chamber's [Business Manifesto 2018](#), launched at the end of 2017, highlights the need to consider a step change in the level of water supply resilience in the Thames Valley region, drawing attention to the fact that population growth across the Thames Valley, and the impacts of climate change, are increasing the risk drought poses to the region through water use restrictions. This may limit the availability of water to certain sectors or, in extreme cases, to all business.

The Manifesto also draws attention to the fact that the estimated economic costs to the region of such restrictions range from £600m to £2.1bn in an extreme drought.

About the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (TVCC) is one of the largest accredited Chambers within the United Kingdom and the only accredited Chamber of Commerce for the Thames Valley region. The Chamber is a proven centre of excellence for trade and inward investment services. Representing over 4,000 companies in membership (including the likes of Microsoft, Vodafone Honda and Bayer), with an economy estimated in size to be more than £83,848m (2015), it is home to over 115,000 businesses, including 11 of the world's top 15 tech companies; the No.1 University in the world (Oxford); the fastest growing city (Reading) in the UK (EY); the two highest performing cities (Oxford and Reading) according to PwC; the second largest trading city in the UK (Slough) and the most productive city per capita (Slough) (Centre for Cities). In addition, the Thames Valley Chamber credits a range of impressive statistics:

- 295,000 combined number of staff employed by members
- 5000+ number of active trade customers

- Over £2.3 billion – the value of international trade enabled
- 68,000 – the number of trade shipments by the end of September 2017
- Average 150 new trade customers each year
- 172 countries trading with our customers
- 83 sectors represented by members and international trade customers
- Consistently one of the UK's most attractive locations for attracting inward investment.
65% of international companies setting up or expanding in the Thames Valley have been supported by TVCC.

Section 2 – Water Resources Programme 2016-2020

We welcome Thames Water's update on its 2016-2020 programme and fully endorse current plans to reduce leakage, continue the roll-out of smart meters and promote water efficiency to save water, energy and money through a wide range of household and business focussed programmes.

Section 4 – Current and future water supply

Thames Water rightly highlights the expectation that climate change will increase the frequency of more extreme droughts in the future and the consequent need to improve future resilience. We fully support their commitment to improving resilience to a 1 in 200- year drought from 2030 and to seeking a sustainable long-term alternative to environmentally damaging drought permits.

Section 6 – Baseline water supply demand position

We note the projections in this section that, within 10 years, deficits will appear in the near term in the Swindon and Oxfordshire (SWOX) zone, and beyond 2050, in the Slough, Wycombe and Aylesbury (SWA) and Kennet Valley zones. These deficits will be caused by population growth in the Thames Valley region and the effects of climate change. In view of this forecast, we support intervention by Thames Water earlier than needed to ensure a positive contribution to sustainable development, as well as flexibility and robustness to the range of future risks and uncertainties.

Section 11 – Preferred plan

For the Swindon and Oxfordshire (SWOX), Slough, Wycombe and Aylesbury (SWA) and Kennet Valley zones, we support a continued focus on reducing leakage, implementing the smart metering programme and continuing to promote water efficiency in the short to medium term.

We also endorse the preferred plan to construct a reservoir near Abingdon, subject to all the required planning permissions, environmental impact, consultation and mitigation measures being fully addressed, to improve future resilience in the Thames Valley region. We would, however, agree that construction activities should be carefully managed, with mitigation measures put in place to ensure minimal disruption to local businesses and residents during the eight-year construction period.

Thank you once again for giving us the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

Paul Britton
Chief Executive