



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs

Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

T: +44 (0) 3459 335577
W: [gov.uk/defra](https://www.gov.uk/defra)

Paul Britton
Chief Executive Officer
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group

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Dear Paul,

Thank you for your letter of 8 January to the Secretary of State about the White Horse Reservoir (formerly SESRO). We have been asked to reply and we apologise for the delay in responding.

Defra is pleased that the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group also recognises the importance of securing a sustainable water supply to the Thames Valley, one of the most water-stressed parts of the country.

Thames Water has announced the tender for the Main Works Contract for the White Horse Reservoir, which would generate up to 1800 jobs in the area. You are also right to highlight the benefits to local growth that water security provided by White Horse Reservoir would bring, as well as the positive environmental and social benefits of the project.

The project will continue to be assessed by the Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development, and as part of the Development Consent Order process, the Environment Agency will scrutinise the ecological and environmental impacts of the project. The reservoir itself forms a part of Thames, Southern, and Affinity Water's Water Resource Management Plans, which are publicly available and include leakage reductions and demand management in addition to strategic resource options such as White Horse Reservoir.

Defra shares the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group's hope that the reservoir programme would deliver long-term water resilience and shared growth for the region.

Yours sincerely,

Ministerial Contact Unit