

**From:** RAPID <[RAPID@ofwat.gov.uk](mailto:RAPID@ofwat.gov.uk)>

**Sent:** 02 December 2025 11:14

**To:** Lisa Warne <[director@cpreoxon.org.uk](mailto:director@cpreoxon.org.uk)>

**Cc:** Chris Walters <[Chris.Walters@ofwat.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Walters@ofwat.gov.uk)>; [Chief.Executive@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Chief.Executive@environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Subject:** RE: Urgent: Request for Review of SESRO (Abingdon Reservoir) Following Gate 3 Cost Escalation

Dear Lisa,

Thank you for your email and letter on 20 November regarding the RAPID Gate Three submission from Thames Water for SESRO, which was addressed to myself, Chris Walters and Philip Duffy.

The Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development (RAPID) is a regulatory alliance across Ofwat, the Environment Agency and the Drinking Water Inspectorate. I am responding to you on behalf of RAPID, representing both Ofwat and the Environment Agency, and have accordingly copied both Chris and Philip into my response.

We are currently assessing the SESRO RAPID Gate Three submission against the requirements of our guidance, and we plan to publish our draft decision on 3 December 2025. Further information about this stage of assessment can be viewed here: [January-2024-Gate-Three-Guidance-Version-3.pdf](#).

On best value, I would clarify that RAPID's role is to assess the extent to which ring-fenced development funding should be continued to progress a given solution. Our gated process does override the statutory water resources planning process, which makes the decision on whether a project should be implemented.

The Environment Agency, Ofwat and Defra have recently published a joint regulator letter requesting that Thames Water submits a revised water resources management plan (WRMP) annual review and formally communicates the implications of cost changes to the SESRO Strategic Resource Option on its preferred plan, including up-to-date information on feasibility, best value and affordability. The company has also been asked to confirm whether the SESRO cost changes affect the preferred options in its WRMP24 - and to complete this update by 22 May 2026. More information about this can be found here: [Thames Water WRMP Annual Review 2025 letter - Ofwat](#)

We ask that representations to RAPID are raised through our official process. I would therefore encourage you to make your representations in the consultation phase after the upcoming publication of our SESRO draft Gate Three decision in early December. Relevant guidance can

be accessed here: [Guide-to-representations-on-draft-decision-documents-November-2024.pdf](#).

I recognise you may have hoped for a more detailed response at this time, let me reassure you that we will be doing everything we can to ensure views on issues which are within RAPID's remit are fully considered in the consultation period following the upcoming SESRO draft Gate Three draft decision.

Kind regards,

Paul

Paul Hickey ([he/him](#))

Senior Director – RAPID and Environmental Planning

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