

RESERVOIR NEWSLETTER

Winter 2026



Illustrative view of the proposed new reservoir in Oxfordshire

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COMMUNITY UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who took the time to have your say during the recent statutory consultation for our proposed new reservoir.

We're grateful for all the consultation responses, and to everyone who joined us at our community information events. We're now carefully analysing all the feedback received during the consultation period. As part of our Development Consent Order (DCO) application, we'll publish a Consultation Report explaining how your feedback has helped shape our proposals. This report will be available following submission of our DCO application, which we expect to be in late 2026.

The start of a new year also brings a fresh identity for the proposed new reservoir. We're proud to share the new project name: White Horse Reservoir. Previously known as South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO), the new name reflects the crucial role the project would play in securing water supplies for the future, while creating a lasting legacy for people and nature.

Another major milestone at the start of 2026, was the publication of a tender notice to appoint a main works contractor to design, build, test and commission the reservoir. As one of the largest investments in water infrastructure for decades, this is a huge step forward for the project and will deliver real, long-term benefits for the region.

Alongside our regular newsletter updates, we'll continue to engage with councillors and local groups, sharing further news as our plans progress and keeping you informed. Together, we have the opportunity to create a lasting legacy - one that strengthens water security, creates new green spaces, and offers opportunities to enjoy the outdoors for generations to come.

Best wishes,

Leonie Dubois

Head of Engagement, Land and Consents for Strategic Resource Options at Thames Water



CONSULTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Statutory Consultation ran for **11 weeks** from **28 October 2025**



We delivered over **78,000** postcards to local residents, organisations and businesses



We held **7** in-person community information events



2 online webinars & **1,261** attended our events



We set up a dedicated consultation webpage



www.thames-sro.co.uk/sesro/statcon2025

We've received over **2,500** consultation responses



Promotional activity across social media, print and digital media, and local rail stations

Thank you for your feedback!

Introducing

White Horse Reservoir

A space for nature, a place for people

We've given the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) project a new name: **White Horse Reservoir.**

At this exciting stage in development, it's important that we give the proposed reservoir a new identity: one that better reflects the crucial role it will play in shoring up water supply, as well as the broader benefits it will deliver for future generations.

New name, same vision

We signalled our intention to move to the White Horse Reservoir name as part of our statutory consultation, with information on it included at community information events and in the statutory consultation brochure. It is the same project, with the same vision, but with a new name that will help people recognise it more easily.



Shaped with the future in mind

White Horse Reservoir is being shaped with the future in mind. The name White Horse Reservoir roots this project in local heritage and in the natural world around us. Our vision is to create an essential piece of infrastructure that not only safeguards water supplies, but also becomes a vibrant, inclusive space for wildlife and for people of all ages.

A space for nature, a place for people

From new woodlands and walking trails to opportunities for water sports, education and community connection, the reservoir would be a place to explore, unwind and thrive.



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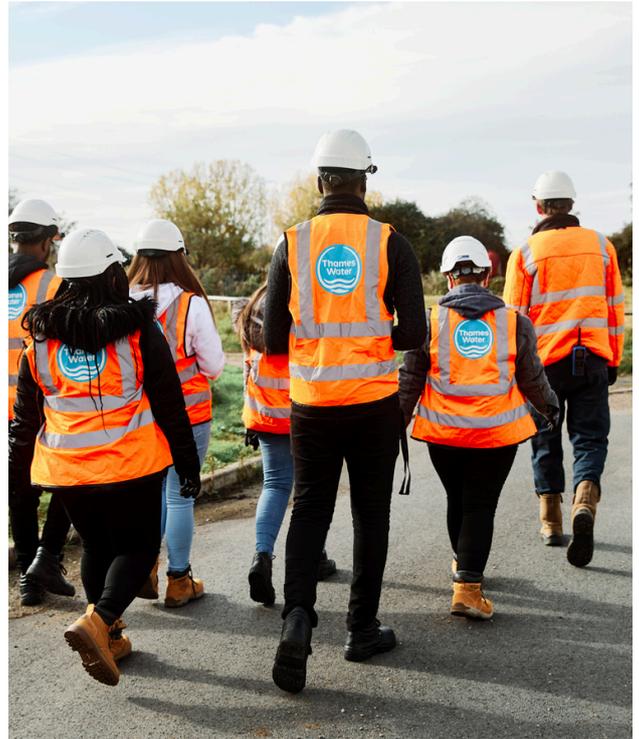
LATEST NEWS

Building for the future

January 2026 marked an exciting milestone as we began selecting a main works contractor to help design and build the reservoir - one of the most significant investments in water infrastructure the UK has seen in decades.

Subject to planning approval, the reservoir would create around 1,800 jobs during construction. Once open, it would attract visitors, boost tourism and support the regional economy for years to come. Roles during and after construction would span a wide range of careers, including ecologists, engineers, archaeologists, electricians, park rangers and sailing instructors. We're already working with schools, colleges and training providers to help build a "reservoir-ready" workforce for the future.

The project would also create vibrant new habitats, including wildlife ponds, wetlands, woodlands and rich grasslands. Visitors could enjoy a new centre and café alongside recreational lakes for sailing and paddleboarding, dedicated angling areas, education spaces and adventure zones.



What's happening in your area

Our environmental assessment work is continuing to build a detailed picture of the site and its surroundings, which is essential for understanding how the project could interact with local wildlife and habitats. As the seasons change, so do our survey priorities. Ecologists are focusing on different species, habitats, and locations as they become active over the colder months - including wintering bird surveys. Ground investigations continue and our archaeological work is progressing well. Specialists are gradually uncovering the area's ancient past, as archaeological trenching continues across the site.

As we move into spring, our presence on and around the site will become more visible as we continue our programme of ecology and archaeological surveys. These surveys are an essential part of understanding the environment and helping to shape the project's design. Together, this continuing work is providing a robust evidence base to guide the next stages of project design, assessment, mitigation measures, and the Environmental Statement that will support our Development Consent application in late 2026.



Contact our Engagement Team

- If you have any questions or topics you'd like us to cover in the future, please contact our Engagement Team on email: whitehorsereservoir@thameswater.co.uk.
- For more information on our reservoir proposals, please visit thames-sro.co.uk/whitehorsereservoir or scan the QR code.

