



Update

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Record £4 billion to modernise Victorian water legacy

Thames Water is to invest a record £4 billion over the next five years modernising Victorian water mains and sewers while simultaneously managing the increasing impacts of population growth and climate change.

The company's formal submission to the water industry's economic regulator, Ofwat, contains the carefully costed plans which would see our customers' bills rising by approximately £1.50 a week by 2010.

Work to replace over 1,000 miles of Victorian water mains

in London is at the heart of Thames Water's plan. This will focus on boroughs where leakage is highest (Brent, Camden, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Tower Hamlets and Westminster).

The plan also includes £520 million to reduce the risk of sewage flooding to customers' properties at times of heavy rainfall, and over £50 million for further work to reduce odours from Mogden Sewage Treatment Works in west London.

Thames Water's Managing



Tackling the essentials: quality and reliability

Proposed average annual bills 2005 -2010



To finance essential improvements in the next five years our average water and wastewater bill needs to rise above inflation by around 25% in 2005/ 6 (based on an average unmeasured household bill for 2004 - 2005) and 12% between 2006 and 2010.

Director, John Sexton, said: "We know that price rises are not popular, but we hope that our customers will recognise the long-term benefits this investment will bring. Serving several of the country's poorest boroughs makes us acutely aware of the need to ensure that our bills remain affordable for all our customers.

"However we know that our customers do want and expect an efficient, reliable service from us. Their biggest concerns - leakage and sewer flooding - are our priorities too and work to tackle both issues is the backbone of our plan.

"Our investment since 1989 has delivered key improvements. Tap water in our region is cleaner than ever before and our work to improve sewage treatment processes has

helped turn the Thames into one of the cleanest metropolitan rivers in the world.

"But we now face new challenges. By 2016 London alone is expected to have 800,000 more residents, more than the equivalent of the current population of Leeds moving to the capital. Climate change, bringing the prospect of hotter, drier summers and more frequent flash floods is also forecast to put greater strain on our networks when, per head of population, London is already drier than Madrid and Istanbul. It is essential that we implement our planned improvement now".

Ofwat will announce new price limits in December 2004.

For more information please visit www.thameswateruk.co.uk or email questions/comments to periodic.review@thameswater.co.uk

Planning Minister visits new Reading Sewage Works

The Housing and Planning Minister, Keith Hill MP, has visited Reading's new £80 million sewage treatment works as part of a tour of the town's landmark regeneration developments.

Mr Hill was shown the new works with Reading West MP Martin Salter, and Reading Borough Council leader David Sutton. The party toured Thames Water's 25-acre works, which is a key part of a local initiative to invigorate the "Reading Gateway" along the route of the A33 relief road.

The site is one of the most technically advanced in the UK and will serve 284,000 customers when fully commissioned by the end of May. The newly completed works features four 20-metre-high egg-shaped digesters, with distinctive aluminium cladding. New landscaping, including 20,000 trees and shrubs, will also add to the transformation of the former disused wasteland.

It replaces Thames

Water's existing works in Manor Farm Road, less than a mile away, which has been notorious locally for odour problems. The new works has been specifically designed to neutralise this problem and has released the former sewage works site for development.

Other benefits include improvements to the quality of treated wastewater returned to local watercourse the Foudry Brook, in line with new EU standards.



State of the art: Keith Hill visits Reading Sewage Works

NEWS IN BRIEF

Reducing sewage flooding in Crawley

Residents in Crawley are to benefit from a £1 million scheme to reduce the risk of flooding from sewers. 400 metres of sewer are to be widened to prevent flooding of twenty-six properties in the Furnace Green area of the town.

The project, which is due to be completed by late September, is one of a series which together aim to improve the sewers serving 2,000 properties across the Thames Water region by 2005.

Plumbing mistakes pollute Thames

Thames Water and the Environment Agency have uncovered plumbing mistakes at eight businesses in Walton on Thames, which have resulted in sinks, toilets and a carwash being connected to surface water sewers (leading directly to the River Thames) instead of being connected to foul sewers that take wastewater to the nearby Esher sewage works for treatment.

As a result untreated sewage and poisonous detergents have been entering the Thames, depleting oxygen levels and threatening the lives of wildlife. The businesses in question, who were unaware their drains were contributing to the pollution, have agreed to carry out the work needed to resolve the problem.

Green electricity generation

Sewage from homes and businesses in Basingstoke is generating "green" electricity, thanks to technology Thames Water has installed at the town's treatment works.

The company has spent £400,000 upgrading the plant, which uses methane produced by the treatment process to generate power. The 380 kilowatts created, together with a thermal output of 580 kilowatts, is used to help operate the treatment works and accounts for 40 per cent of the total energy used there.

Minister tours London sewers

The Environment Minister Elliot Morley got a taste of subterranean London recently when he descended into one of London's Victorian sewers.

The Minister donned protective clothing and breathing apparatus to see for himself

how the capital's spectacular 1,300-mile network of brick sewers and chambers is coping with the pressures of modern day life in the city.

Mr Morley said that he was 'fascinated' by the foresight and craftsmanship of the

Victorians. "These sewers are essential to the smooth-running of Europe's busiest city. They perform a vital public service, which we all too often take for granted", he said.

London's sewer system was founded by Sir Joseph Bazalgette following "The Great Stink" of 1858 when the stench of raw sewage in the River Thames forced Parliament to close.

Though the basic fabric of the Bazalgette system remains in good working order, Thames Water says new investment is needed to maintain and modernise the network, as climate change is expected to increase the severity and regularity of flash floods, a problem exacerbated by the concreting over of London's green spaces able to soak up heavy rainfall.



A vital public service: London's Victorian sewers