The Simple Fact is that the Reservoir is not needed: both Government and Thames Water figures show this

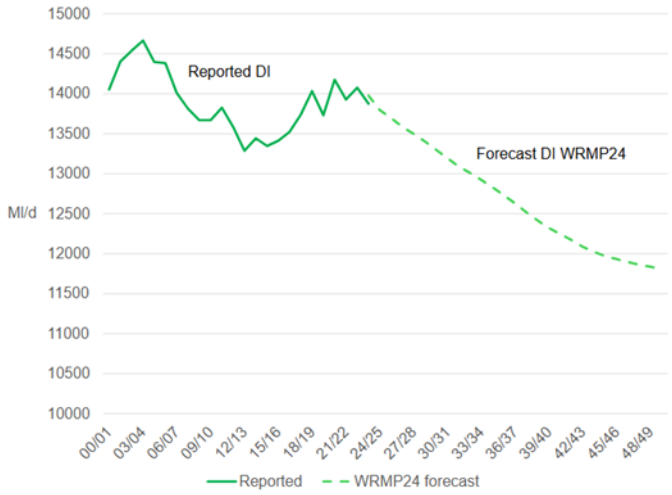
Government figures

Latest government figures show the need for water nationally is declining

Environment Agency figures[1] show water needed ('Distribution input') *declines* to 2050.

This is due to the success in forcing companies to address leakage and adopt water efficiency measures (including compulsory metering).

Figure 5: England-wide reported distribution input 2000-2024 and WRMP forecast distribution input from 2024-2050 (based on revised draft WRMP24 plans)

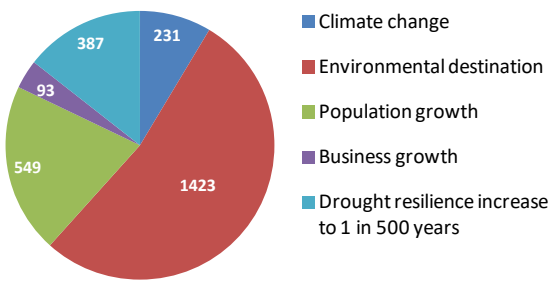


Distribution Input is the water put into water supply pipe networks from water sources, **so it includes the amount lost through leakage as well as the amount used by customers**

Why does the government hide this fact? Why ignore the data?

The fact is the government have *created the shortage* by allowing Water Companies to make plans that maximise abstractions reductions from rivers and aquifers – the so-called 'Environmental Destination'[2]:

Drivers of increased water supply need for South-East water companies by 2050 (Millions of litres per day)



It is 'Environmental Destination', not climate change or population growth, that is driving unnecessary building of huge infrastructure projects such as SESRO, replacing 'decommissioned' existing sources.

[1] Government analysis of 2023-24 water resources performance, Figure 5, October 2024 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-resources-2023-2024-analysis-of-the-water-industrys-annual-water-resources-performance/water-resources-2023-2024-analysis-of-the-water-industrys-annual-water-resources-performance

[2] EA review of 2024 WRMPs, Figure 1 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-review-of-englands-draft-regional-and-water-resources-management-plans/a-summary-of-englands-draft-regional-and-water-resources-management-plans

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Companies not only plan to reduce/remove abstractions from the vulnerable chalk streams and aquifers – **a good thing which GARD fully supports** – but also to reduce abstractions from lower reaches of modified and canalised rivers, like the River Lea (see photo), where the ecology is not dependent on river flows. There has been no cost-benefit analysis to justify the 1423 Million litres per day of planned decommissioning of sources in the South East – equivalent to five SESROs. The extreme cases like the Lea cause Thames Water to claim there is a deficit in the 2050s (see below). **GARD's view is that this is an unnecessary abandoning of existing supplies and that the money would be better spent on sewage clean-up infrastructure in rivers.**

The lower River Lea in East London where about **120 Ml/d of supply reductions are planned with a replacement cost of over £1 billion**

Thames Water's own figures – London case

We have derived the graphs below from Thames Water's own figures (final WRMP24)

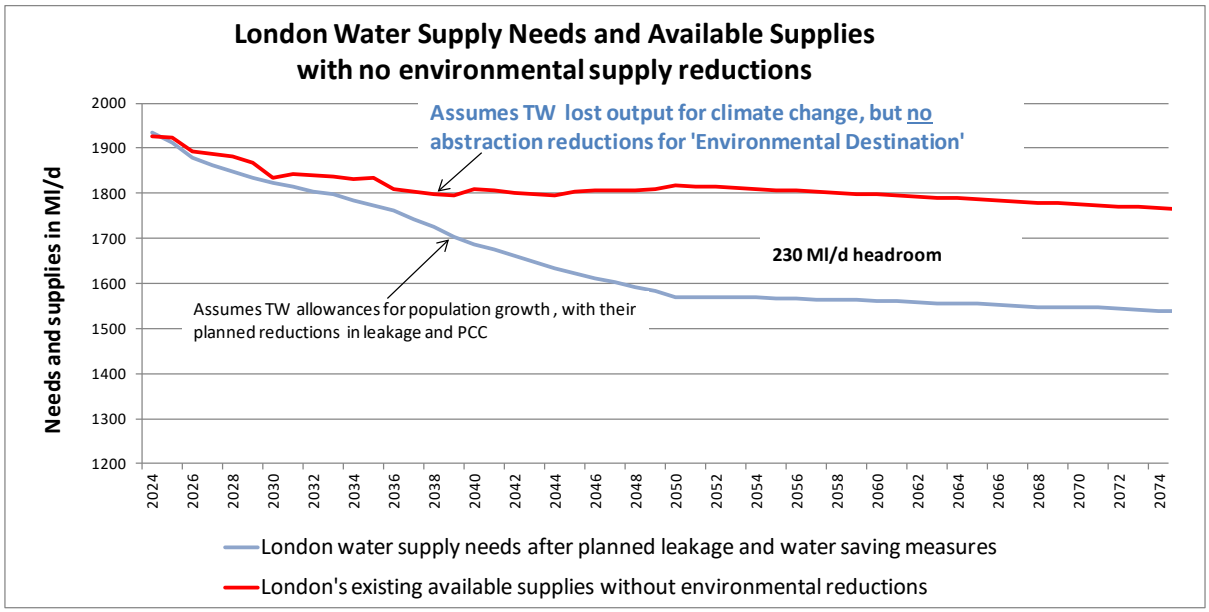

Figure 1: Thames Water has no deficit without the 'Environmental' abstraction reductions

Figure 1 allows for planned reductions in leakage and per capita water use to meet Government targets by 2050.It also includes reductions in supply forecast for climate change.

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Figure 2 uses the same leakage, per capita consumption, and climate change figures as figure 1, but includes **all the environmental reductions in supplies allowed for in Thames Water's plan**[3].

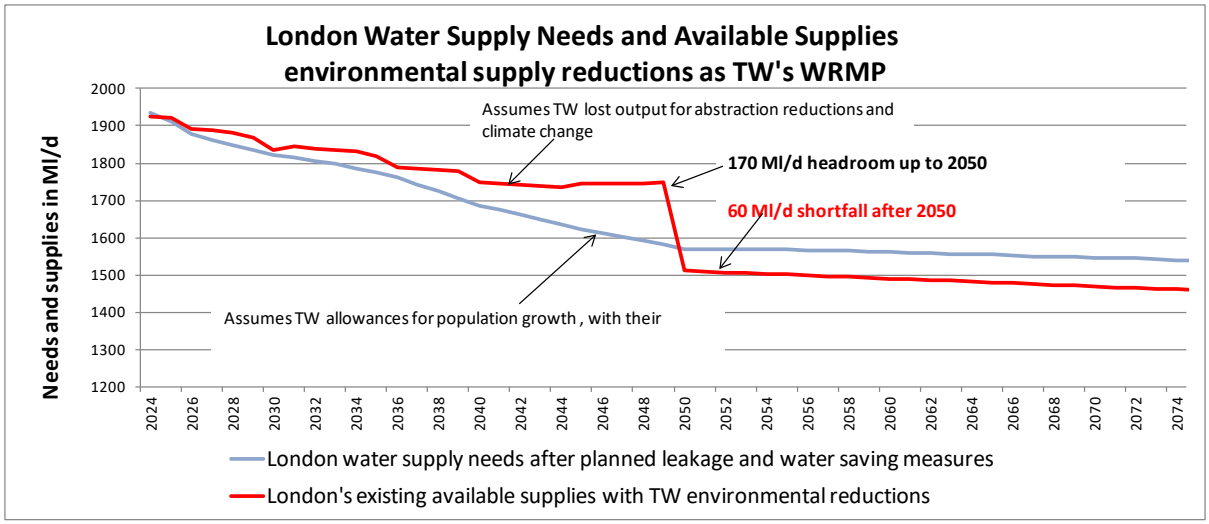

Figure 2: With 'Environmental' abstraction reductions, Thames Water still are not in deficit until the final reductions (Lea, Colne and Darent lower reaches) in the 2050s.

The deficit that appears in the 2050s results from reducing abstractions in the lower, canal-like stretches of three rivers (Lea, Colne and Darent), with no examination of cost or environmental benefit, nor the impact of replacement sources like SESRO.

Figure 3 uses Thames Water figures regarding leakage, per capita consumption, and climate change as in figure 1. **However the demand (blue) curve now uses Office of National Statistics (ONS) figures for population growth** – well below the Thames Water predictions.

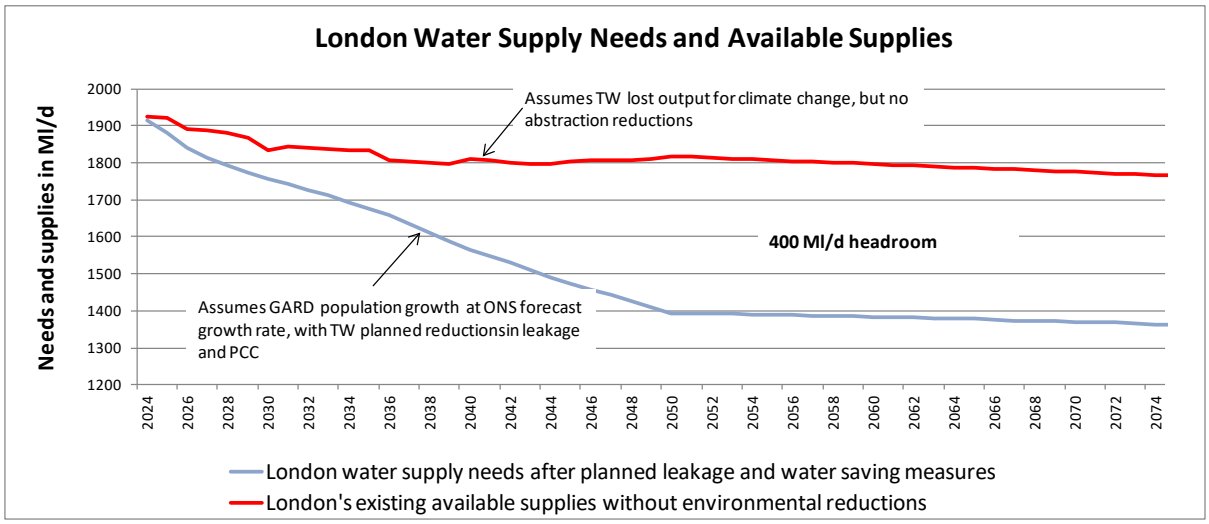

Figure 3: With ONS-based population figures (as used by GARD), Thames Water has even more headroom before abstraction reductions.

[3] Thames Water's supplies are probably under-estimated because they make only very small allowance for 'recovery' of supplies in the lower rivers due to increased flows following the upstream abstraction cuts.

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Before allowing for abstraction reductions, Thames Water will have, in reality, a huge headroom (about one SESRO supply more than the target headroom they are required to provide).

Finally**, Figure 4** uses Thames Water figures regarding leakage, per capita consumption, outage and climate change as in figure 1, in combination with **abstraction reductions as in figure 2,** and **Office of National Statistics (ONS) figures for population growth as in figure 3.** Existing available supplies allow for Thames Water's forecast reductions due to climate change and AMP7 environmental reductions up to 2025, and all of the further environmental reductions in existing supplies allowed for in Thames Water's plan.

It can be clearly seen that, with official, more-realistic, population growth figures, even with the full 'Environmental Destination' abstraction reduction programme, there is no shortage of water in the London area (or any other Thames Water area).

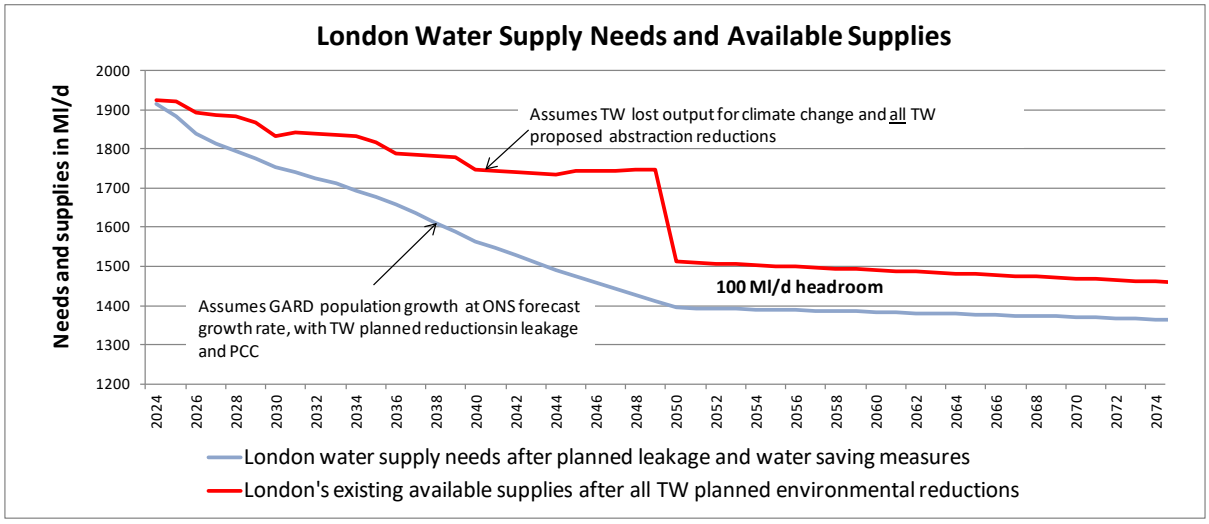

Figure 4: With ONS-based population figures (as used by GARD), Thames Water has no shortfall even with full Environmental abstraction reductions.

GARD's view

There should be a rigorous prioritisation and cost-benefit analysis of the abstraction reductions assumed for 'Environmental Destination', after which SESRO will not be needed, even after allowing for the widespread decommissioning of sources in the ecologically sensitive chalk streams, which GARD fully supports.

Hence a huge amount of capital expenditure (over £2.6 billion at 2022 prices) can be diverted to the much needed sewage infrastructure improvements that the public is demanding.

20-03-2025