

PRESS RELEASE

Munira Wilson, MP for Twickenham

## **Twickenham MP leads debate on Thames Water's controversial water recycling plans at Teddington**

*The Liberal Democrat MP for Twickenham, Munira Wilson, led a debate in Parliament to raise local residents' concerns with the Environment Minister*

The Liberal Democrat MP for Twickenham, Munira Wilson, led a debate on Wednesday 6 September in Parliament on Thames Water's plans to discharge millions of litres of treated sewage into the river at Teddington.

With the proposals currently awaiting the green light from the Government, the debate was a vital opportunity for local concerns to be put to the Minister for Environmental Quality and Resilience, Rebecca Pow, who had previously dodged repeated calls from local MPs for a meeting.

Opening the debate, Munira highlighted the strength of local feeling against the scheme, including concerns over the environmental impacts on the river and important local habitats for wildlife. Moormead Park and Ham Lands are among the green spaces which might be turned from conservation to construction sites if the scheme is approved.

Munira also raised Thames Water's abysmal record on leakage, which is at its highest rate for the past five years. Since 2019, Richmond Council has fined Thames Water £200,000 for overrunning roadworks and disruption caused by burst pipes in the local area.

"To quote the Environment Agency's response to the proposal," Munira said during the debate, "Thames Water have so-far failed to show that the Teddington scheme is 'feasible or environmentally acceptable'. That is a pretty low baseline."

Several other local MPs spoke in Munira's debate. Sarah Olney, the Liberal Democrat MP for Richmond Park, stressed that Thames Water's plan to build on Ham Lands would be a catastrophe for the local environment and community in her constituency.

Ed Davey, the Leader of the Liberal Democrats and MP for Kingston and Surbiton, highlighted the strength of local opposition to the proposals, while Ruth Cadbury, Labour MP for Brentford and Isleworth, demonstrated cross-party support in suggesting Thames Water focus on significantly reducing water leakages.

In her response, Minister Rebecca Pow shed little light on the Government's position on the scheme, mentioning Teddington just twice during her twelve-minute speech. Thames Water plan to proceed with a further consultation period in October focused solely on the details of the Teddington scheme.

Munira and Richmond Park MP Sarah Olney have written to the Minister once again to request a meeting to discuss the details of Thames Water's proposal. In her speech, Munira also invited the Minister to attend Save Ham Lands and River's event in Ham this Saturday to speak with local residents and river users.

**After the debate, Munira Wilson, Liberal Democrat MP for Twickenham, said:**

"After the Minister repeatedly ignored our calls for a meeting to discuss Thames Water's plan, this debate was finally an opportunity to force the Government to listen to the extent of local people's concerns.

"The Thames runs through the very heart of our community and has shaped our area for hundreds of years. It is no wonder that residents in Teddington, Twickenham, St Margarets and beyond are passionate about protecting it from a water company whose reputation is in the gutter.

"From lack of investment to leaky pipes, Thames Water are haemorrhaging public trust at the same rate as our water supply. Recent revelations about the construction impacts of the scheme on beautiful local green spaces, such as Moormead Park and Ham Lands, only add fuel to the fire.

"This scheme is not worth the consequences for our river, our precious local environment and our vibrant community of river user groups."

**Sarah Olney, the Liberal Democrat MP for Richmond Park, who also spoke at the debate, said:**

"This 'sewage for water' scheme is symbolic of everything that is wrong with the water industry. It will pollute our waterways, devastate rare local wildlife, and it's only needed because Thames Water failed to invest in its network for decades.

"I cannot accept that the best solution to securing London's water supply is a scheme that will tear up a nature reserve and dump billions of litres of effluent into the river every year.

"Tens of thousands of people oppose this scheme. Not one person I have spoken to supports it. We don't need endless consultations, the verdict is already clear, now we just need ministers to listen."

**\*\*\* ENDS \*\*\***

**Notes to Editor:**

- Read the full transcript of Munira's Westminster Hall debate [here](#).
- Read more about Munira's previous actions to scrutinise Thames Water's plans [here](#).